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280/28



James Lenox.

Scenes





**UNDER THE
ESPECIAL PATRONAGE**



**OF
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,
THE QUEEN.**



THE
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OR,
Cabinet Library of Divinity.

EDITED BY
THE REV. R. CATTERMOLE, B.D.
AND
THE REV. H. STEBBING, M.A.

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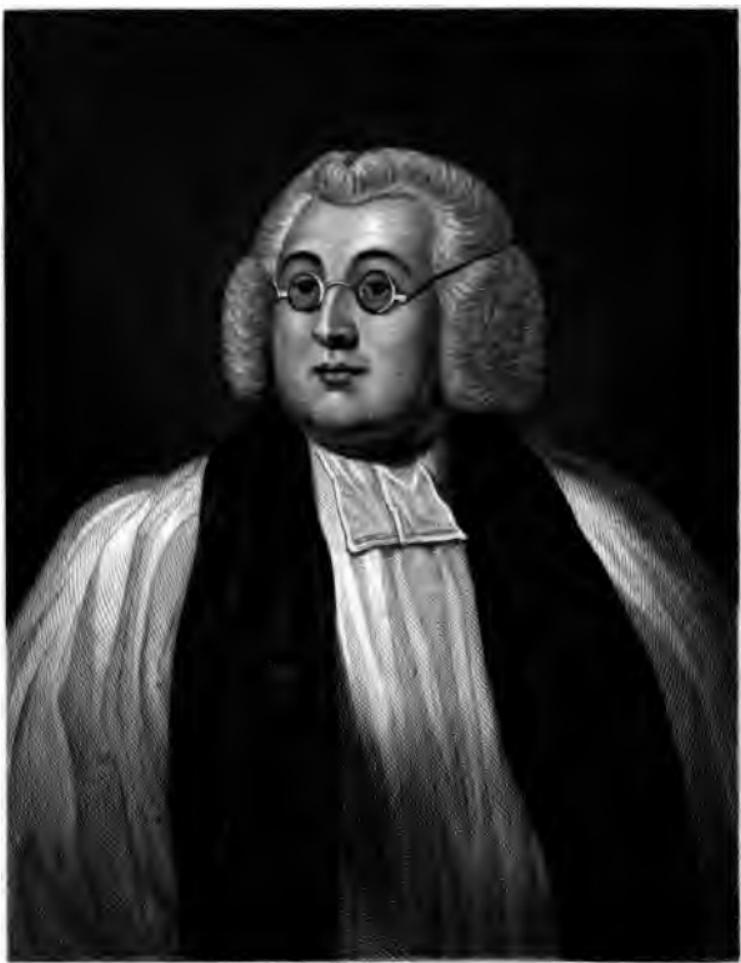
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GEORGE HORNE, D.D.

Late Lord Bishop of Llandaff





A
COMMENTARY
ON THE
BOOK OF PSALMS,

BY
GEORGE HORNE, D.D.
LATE LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY
JAMES MONTGOMERY, ESQ.

AND A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE LATE
REV. WILLIAM JONES,
OF NAYLAND.

LONDON :

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AND T. WARDLE, PHILADELPHIA.

MDCCLXXVI.

J.



AN
INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,
BY
JAMES MONTGOMERY, ESQ.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

Sacred to the Memory of
THE RIGHT REVEREND GEORGE HORNE, D. D.,

MANY YEARS PRESIDENT OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE IN OXFORD,

DEAN OF CANTERBURY,

AND LATE BISHOP OF THIS DIOCESE.

IN WHOSE CHARACTER

DEPTH OF LEARNING, BRIGHTNESS OF IMAGINATION,

SANCTITY OF MANNERS, AND SWEETNESS

OF TEMPER,

WERE UNITED BEYOND THE USUAL LOT OF MORTALITY.

* * * * *

HIS SOUL, HAVING PATIENTLY SUFFERED UNDER SUCH INFIRMITIES

AS SEEMED NOT DUE TO HIS YEARS,

TOOK ITS FLIGHT FROM THIS VALE OF MISERY,

* * * * *

JANUARY 17, 1792, IN THE 62D YEAR OF HIS AGE.

OF few men can it be said, that their epitaphs have more concisely, yet comprehensively, summed up the main events of their mortal lives, than this abridgement of the more verbose inscription on the tablet in Norwich cathedral, to the memory of Bishop Horne—records of the stages by which he passed quietly, prosperously, and usefully from the commencement to the close of his public career. What is here registered at his death might almost have been prophesied at his birth, as,

according to the course of nature in society, to be reasonably expected concerning a child of parentage like his, intended to be educated, as he afterwards was, so as to qualify him to fill high stations in the school and the church, and furthermore endowed with gifts, both of Providence and grace, to adorn and dignify the same. This, indeed, could only have been hopefully anticipated on the presumption that, in this enlightened age, learning and talents, virtue and piety must make their way, when they can start from so fair a point, with so clear a course, and in a line so direct as first had been chosen for him, and eventually adopted by himself, when he had understanding to make his election between religion without reference to its secular prospects, and a religious profession to gratify worldly aspirings. In fifty instances the prediction might have failed, considering the numberless contingencies to defeat its accomplishment; in this one, however, it was verified, to the honour of the individual, to the credit of that Church of which he became so illustrious a minister, and to the advantage of the Christian public to which his writings have been made so distinguished a blessing. Yet there was, on the very threshold, an obstacle, which seemed to portend no such advancement without conflict and peril all the way through. George Horne was the son of a clergyman, who had obtained no extraordinary prefer-

ment, and who clave to his integrity with such firmness of purpose, that, to use an expression of his own, of which the best commentary upon the words were his deeds, “he would rather be a toad-eater to a mountebank than flatter any great man against his conscience.” Such a parent was never likely to bring up his son as an ecclesiastical fortune-hunter. The son was worthy of the parent, and each had his reward; the former in faithfully fulfilling his pastoral and family duties throughout his parish and at home; the latter, in passing through one degree of honour to another; from the condition of a humble curate to the highest dignity in the establishment, as quietly as the moon in the firmament waxes

“ From the dim streak of western light,
To the full orb that rules the night : ”

like her too, reflecting all around him the light which he received from a higher source; not as his own, but causing it so to shine before men, that they, seeing his good deeds, glorified his heavenly Father; he meanwhile ever aiming to attract attention, not to himself but to Him whom in all things he endeavoured to resemble, as ‘the disciple (may be) like his master, and the servant like his lord.’

The father was in many things, as became him, the instructor and exemplar of his son; training him up, not only in the nurture and admonition of

the Lord, and early initiating him in the rudiments of all useful knowledge; but also habituating him to the practice of those courteous and benevolent dispositions and manners towards others, which in himself were remarkably ingratiating. Such was his tenderness to this delicate child, (the second among seven,) that he was wont to awaken him when an infant with the soft notes of the flute, lest he should be startled too suddenly from sleep, in alarm or ill temper. The father of Montaigne, in like manner, because some folks fancied that the understandings of children were impaired by their being rudely roused from their golden slumbers,—the fairy phantasies of “that strange thing, an infant’s dream,” to realities as strange and dream-like to them,—had music every morning introduced into his son’s chamber, that he might awake in good humour or gay exhilaration of spirit, as well as with bodily refreshment. Horne was Montaigne in all the lively and amiable accomplishments of that ingenious and fascinating egotist, but *without* his egotism, and *with* what Montaigne never knew, ‘the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.’ At home young Horne was beloved for many endearing qualities, but especially that rare one of being a peace-maker; and ‘blessed’ as such characters are in all situations of life, thrice and four times blessed are they in families, when they study to prevent those petty strifes from which so

many of the miseries of every-day life arise. By a sensibility, "quick as the apple of an eye," he instantly perceived when offence had been hazarded, and before it could be resented, contrived to turn it off with some pleasantry so apt and opportune, that the parties had no choice but to fall back into good humour, instead of falling out with each other. When we consider how long and how bitterly such minute provocations may rankle in the minds and canker the tempers of brothers and sisters, such a pacifier in a household must have been an invaluable inmate,—a guardian angel even in the person of a child.

After due preparation in classical studies, first under his father and afterwards under the Rev. Deodatus Bye, he was so well-grounded, indeed so far advanced in these, that as a youth of extraordinary promise, he obtained a Maidstone scholarship in University College, Oxford, and entered himself there at the age of fifteen years. Here, without ostentation, but not unobserved by those who could appreciate his merits, he devoted himself with such diligence and success to the acquisition of the best knowledge of every kind within his reach, that when he took his degree, and a Kentish fellowship happened to become vacant in another College, (Magdalen,) the senior fellow of his own, (University,) without the privity of Mr. Horne, gave such a recommendation of him to the society

of the former, that, on the day of election, the fellowship was, most honourably to all parties, conferred upon him. The Rev. Mr. Jones, at that time his college companion, through subsequent life his confidential friend, and after death his affectionate biographer,—(whose Memoirs also accompany this edition of his greatest work,)—thus summarily anticipates from this turning-point of his fortune, his onward progress of preferment. The brief extract may be well introduced here, to obviate the necessity of any future particular notice of the circumstances in this limited Essay. “If we look back upon our past lives, it will generally be found, that the leading facts, which gave a direction to all that followed, were not according to our own choice or knowledge, but from the hand of an overruling Providence, which acts without consulting us : * * * * * leading us, as it led the patriarch Abraham—of whom we are told, that he knew not whither he was going. This was plainly the case in Mr. Horne’s election to Magdalen College. A person took up the matter unsolicited and in secret : he succeeded. When fellow, his character and conduct gave him favour with the society, and when Dr. Jenner died, they elected him president. The headship of the college introduced him to the office of vice-chancellor, which at length made him as well known to Lord North, as to Lord Hawkesbury (who had been his fellow-student:) this led

to the deanery of Canterbury, and that to the bishopric of Norwich." And thus grew he up on the spot where he first struck root 'in the house of the Lord,' as gradually, we may almost say as naturally (without effort of his own, but under the blessing of God who gave him favour in the sight of those who had patronage) as, in the first paragraph of his favourite book of Holy Scripture, it is said concerning him, 'whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law (who) doth meditate day and night,' that 'he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.' Here the personal character as well as the lot in life of the subject of these remarks are precisely defined and picturesquely displayed; while his own commentary on the text presents a scarcely less happy illustration of both. "All the fruits of righteousness show themselves in their proper season, as opportunity calls for them; and his words, which are to his actions what the leaves are to the fruit, fall not to the ground, but are profitable as well as ornamental. Every thing in him and about him serves the purpose for which it was intended; his brethren are benefited by him, and his Maker is glorified."

Among other traits of Mr. Horne's frank and ingenuous disposition, may be mentioned his fond-

ness for letter-writing to his family connexions and his college-associates, in youth. Nothing in that season of hope and promise is more promising or hopeful (as the pledge of future excellence in knowledge and virtue) than freedom in speaking from the abundance of the heart, in the presence of chosen companions, or in pouring out, in epistolary correspondence with such, the thoughts that accumulate in the mind, on subjects of common interest to both. Friendship is of earlier growth than passion ; and, between persons of the same sex and congenial disposition, it ought to be cultivated while it is in season, before a warmer affection monopolizes all that can be spared from self-love and self-interest, in the business and pleasures of life, the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, the pursuit of honours, or the humbler but happier fulfilment of the duties and occupations of that state of life, in which Providence may have placed us.

In the friendships of undissembling, unbetrayed, unsophisticated youth, there is a sweetness, a purity, and a joyance, which render their fleeting prime the golden age (if one there be) of human life; never to be remembered without a regret, itself so delightful in the indulgence as almost to renew "the olden time" of our young days, when "such things were, and were to us most dear and precious." In the case of the good

man before us, his early attachments were long cherished, and in no worthy instance ever resigned till death bereaved him of the friends of his heart, or removed him from their eyes, whom it could not remove from their affections. Mr. Jones mentions, that he himself had in his possession more than a hundred of Mr. Horne's letters, adding that "his mind had so much to communicate, and his words were so natural and lively, that some of these might be ranked with the most valuable productions of the kind." His biographer assigns a delicate but unsatisfactory reason why these have not been given to the world; namely, that "in letters not intended for the public eye, (as none of his ever were,) and suggested by the incidents of the time, some of them trivial and domestic, there will be, of course, many passages of less dignity than will entitle them to publication." Now, with the excision of such passages as are—not of "less dignity," but of less suitableness for publication,—letters of this kind are the very things which are most coveted by readers of the elaborated works of great men, that they may see them as they are in their hearts, at their fire-sides, in the undress of their minds, and in the freedom as well as the fervour of their affections. If the familiar epistles of the author of the "*Letters on Infidelity*," (first written as such, though afterwards a little more trimly apparelled to attract attention from the world and meet the

eyes of the scoffer,) be of proportionate excellence in their way,—it may be safely presumed that the withholding of them is at least a negative offence, which it will require more charity to forgive than his admirers will be inclined to exercise, without the mental reserve of wishing that nothing had remained to be felt as though it were unforgiven. Next to the inestimable relics of this description, with which the biographers of Cowper have enriched our country's literature, it would hardly be too sanguine to calculate upon what might possibly be recovered of the correspondence of Horne,—not as equalling, but as delightfully resembling that of the author of “The Task,” whom the commentator on the Psalms resembled in almost every thing except that mysterious melancholy, which made the Christian poet's life wretched with ‘the fear which bath torment,’ while in the Christian minister, ‘perfect love’ seemed at once to have ‘cast out fear,’ and enabled him under all circumstances, ‘with joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation.’ We know not from whom the following character of cheerful piety, combined with brilliant accomplishments, was drawn in Cowper's poem on Conversation; but Horne, at any period of his life, after he had consecrated himself to the service of God and man, might have been the prototype. The whole is admirable, and reflects equal honour upon the poetic painter and

the saintly sitter, of one of the most truly Christian portraits ever drawn.

—An “advocate of sin and shame
Known by his bleating, Ignorance his name,”

has been asking, with supercilious look and tone,

“What ! always dreaming over heavenly things,
Like angels’ heads in stone with pigeons’ wings ?
Canting and whining out all day the word,
And half the night ?—Fanatic and absurd !
Mine be the friend, less frequent in his prayers,
Who makes no bustle with his soul’s affairs ;
Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,
And chase the spleenetic dull hours away.”

The poet thus triumphantly answers the scorner :—

“Is sparkling wit the world’s exclusive right ?
The fix’d fee-simple of the vain and light ?
Can hopes of heaven, bright prospects of an hour,
That come to waft us out of sorrow’s power,
Obscure or quench a faculty, that finds
Its happiest soil in the serenest minds ?

* * * * *

A Christian’s wit is inoffensive, light,
A beam that aids, but never grieves the sight ;
Vigorous in age as in the flush of youth,
'Tis always active on the side of truth :
Temperance and peace ensure its healthful state,
And make it brightest at its latest date.

Oh ! I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain,
Ere life go down, to see such sight again,)
A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield ;
Grave without dulness, learned without pride,
Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen-eyed ;

—A man who would have foil'd, at their own play,
A dozen *would-bes* of the modern day ;
Who, when occasion justified its use,
Had wit as bright as ready to produce ;
Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
Or from philosophy's enlighten'd page,
His rich materials, and regale your ear
With strains it was a privilege to hear :
Yet above all, his luxury supreme,
And his chief glory, was the gospel theme ;
There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,
His happy eloquence seem'd there at home ;
Ambitious, not to shine or to excel,
But to treat justly what he loved so well.”

But though Mr. Horne thus well began, and the end of life continued, so far as he was known, to prosper in all that he undertook,—it is only by the diligent employment of his talents, & their application, in the best manner to the things, that he was enabled to excel, both in virtue and learning, the multitude of his contemporaries. His talents may not have been of the highest order, but they were of that order which are much oftener rendered useful than those of the first, partly because they are more frequently found, (as qualification for the greatest necessity generally are,) but especially because the possessor is under obligation to improve his own share to the utmost, if he would rise to honourable distinction among his fellows, or a good and faithful servant, occupy them profitably till his Lord should call him to account. Wh

ever may have been their relative proportion to the natural endowments of others, Mr. Horne's abilities were far above mediocrity; and they were peculiarly sound, healthful, and suited for practical purposes of the most beneficial kind; while, being united with lively fancy and amiable affections, they were not expended on curious and subtle, profound and inconclusive speculations in morals or religion, frittered away in the refinements of verbal criticism, nor entangled, beyond the possibility of extrication for any sublimer occupation, in abstruse mathematical perplexities;—but they were uniformly exercised on themes of the most solemn, august, and animating character, involving the present peace, the future hope, the eternal happiness (with the tremendous alternatives of these) of every individual (whether apart or in society) of the whole human race. And he cultivated those talents, it may be said, in the open air, in the broad sunshine, under the fostering sky, in their native soil, that they might produce leaves, flowers, and fruits in their season—not stoving them in bothouses, or rearing them under glasses, to force the bud, blossom, and seed to appear prematurely and against nature, as rarities to be admired, and when admiration ceased, to be no further regarded. Like Timothy, from a child ‘ having known the Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,’ he spent all his powers

of mind, and hallowed the whole affection of his nature, to learn for himself every lesson which these taught for that purpose, that he might be so instructed as to teach others how to apply for themselves, to the same source of all heavenly knowledge; with the assurance of thereby attaining to the like precious faith, which had come to him by hearing of the word, the same hope full of immortality which had been inspired into his soul, and a measure of the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them, which he had experienced.

The earnest conscientiousness and scrupulous reverence with which he thus searched the Scriptures, may have betrayed him, on the one hand, to cleave more pertinaciously than became so acute a critic, so disciplined a scholar, and so zealous a divine, to the *letter* of the Hebrew text, as settled by the authority of Cardinal Ximenes in the sixteenth century; and, on the other hand, to indulge in such latitude of spiritual interpretation of *that very letter*, as (in some cases) to make the simplest forms of speech complex, by evolving meanings from them, which could never have been suspected but upon an assumed principle of general application (of the Psalms for example, as we shall see hereafter) to the Messiah in almost every clause and every phrase, that could be wrested from its apparently most obvious sense. By this he exposed

himself (not without plausible pretext on the part of his gainsayers) to the charge of being a disciple of the once-celebrated John Hutchinson ; an imputation from which he took considerable pains to exonerate himself. Whether he did so or not, he certainly exposed, with great tact and dexterity, the ignorance of his accusers on the nature of the very charges which they preferred against him, proving that they did not so much as know what the doctrines of Hutchinson were. That extraordinary man had professed to find, in his own mode of interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures, the true system of nature, in confutation of Newton's mathematical theories, and the true system of religion, in opposition to the controverted orthodoxy of Dr. Samuel Clarke's principles in divinity. The fact was, that about this time (the middle of the eighteenth century) the attention of Mr. Horne and his erudite Oxford friends was very much turned towards the study of the Old Testament Scriptures in the original tongues, and the insolvable question,—which is the right mode of reading the Hebrew text, with or without the vowel-points ? The latter were pronounced by Hutchinson to be Jewish forgeries of later date than the fifth century, and invented for the express purpose of misinterpreting the oracles of God, and preventing those who searched for Christ in them, from finding Him there. The subject being too comprehensive and intricate to be further discussed in

this place, it is sufficient to say, that how far Mr. Horne, for a time, was disturbed from his quiet course, in consequence of the crossing of his orbit by the above-named eccentric comet, both in philosophy and theology, may be known by perusing Mr. Jones's abstract from one of his letters, written during that transition-period to his father; wherein he gives a summary of his studies and researches on these difficult topics, and the result so far as they had influenced his opinions, religious and scientific. Certain it is, that extraordinary jealousy of every departure from the received letter of the original Scriptures was infused into his mind, with a corresponding prejudice against those philosophers whom he imagined to have secretly combined with infidels, by their speculations on the laws of the material universe, to invalidate the Scripture testimony of facts referring to the same; prejudice and jealousy which he never entirely overcame. The latter was especially manifested in his opposition to the scheme of Dr. Kennicott, by the collation and comparison, according to their estimated value, of manuscripts, to produce as perfect a copy as possible of the Hebrew Scriptures. Mr. Horne's objections originated in suspicion, that, under pretence of the received text being corrupt in some places, and in others defective, it was the occult purpose of the revisors to render it actually defective and corrupt, by the rejection of what was suf-

ficiently authenticated, as well as by the interpolation or substitution of new and hitherto unauthorised readings. Though the plan, at first sight, was calculated to commend itself to every man's judgment, the object being so intrinsically desirable, yet the difficulty of rightly accomplishing the task (when tests so precarious were to be applied to a subject so delicate, that the variation of a letter might be injurious to a doctrine or an argument involved in the context) by arbiters, themselves presumed to be imperfectly qualified for it,—this might well suggest the propriety of some pause before approbation was given to it by the few who were 'very jealous for the Lord of hosts,' in the integrity of his word, when multitudes, both of nominal believers and avowed infidels, were ready to 'make void his law,' by invalidating the recognized roll of his statute-book. No such imagination can be reasonably supposed to have entered into the mind of Dr. Kennicott, with whom, though Mr. Horne commenced acquaintance as an antagonist, he afterwards, on knowing him better, maintained a generous and well-reciprocated friendship, notwithstanding the contrariety of their sentiments on this hard question. The resistance of Mr. Horne and his brother Hebraists (whose names and characters are honourably recorded by Mr. Jones) checked the rashness of the procedure; and whether or not they hindered any good from being done,

they prevented all the evil that might be apprehended from hasty and unhallowed hands being laid on the ark which contains the covenant of peace.

Still it must be acknowledged, that the Scriptures, in the very words in which they were actually composed by holy men of God, under the inspiration of his own Holy Spirit, must, after all, be the best form in which they have appeared in human language; and, though it may be admitted, that no extant copy of the original, not wilfully or negligently corrupted, nor even any translation, honestly made by hands ordinarily qualified,—is so imperfect, but that, through a knowledge of it, the gospel may not be made ‘the power of God unto salvation to them that believe;’—yet, as no Christian people ought to be satisfied with a version of the Scriptures in their own tongue less faithful than can be achieved at the time being, so the Christian world (whose trustees for the accuracy of the sacred books the learned are) ought not to be satisfied with a less genuine and perfect standard of the same in the original text, than can be obtained by the severest scrutiny and comparison of all documents which can claim any degree of respect in the course of such an inquisition. The true spirit must be best discerned in the true letter; hence, as it is confessed that no essential doctrine, no fact of importance, has yet been endangered by any of the discoveries (minute or

more considerable) which the subtlest criticism has hitherto been able to make; while no small number, in the whole, of minor variations have been found, which throw light upon doctrines the most precious and facts the most obscure,—it is most desirable that learning, in every successive age, should be employed to search out and correct the errors of learning in every former age; both that the ascertained purity of the text may be preserved and that the remaining alloy may be gradually removed.

The prejudice which Mr. Horne and those of his Oxford friends, who were almost if not altogether Hutchinsonians, entertained against the philosophers of the mathematical school, arose from the persuasion (already intimated) that their theories of the universe and the mode of its providential government led to materialism. This was confirmed by the credence which they gave to certain reports that Sir Isaac Newton himself, Dr. Samuel Clarke, and others held a confidential understanding with the sceptics of their day, such as Collins, Toland, and Tindal. Mr. Jones, who was one of the most earnest of his party, even affirms it as “an undoubted fact, that there was an attempt to introduce atheism, or materialism, (which is the same thing,) here in England, toward the beginning of the last century, of which the Pantheisticon of John Toland, under a barbarous

technical name, is a sufficient proof: and Hutchinson, who knew all the parties concerned, and the designs going forward, dropped such hints in his ‘Treatise on Power essential and mechanical,’ as gave a serious alarm to many persons well-disposed.” Mr. Horne, however, at the age of nineteen years, viewing the whole in the discolouring and distorting light of absurdity, attacked the system, and even its venerable chief, with the weapons of ridicule, in an anonymous pamphlet, containing an ironical defence of the Newtonian philosophy, affecting to demonstrate that it was “perfectly agreeable to the notions of the wisest ancients, as these are shown in the theology and philosophy of Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis*; and that mathematical principles are the only sure ones!” Thus early he adventured into the most perilous field of literature, polemics, to display his dexterity and prowess. In dexterity he excelled, in prowess he failed; and he had not lived much longer before he had lived long enough to discover and lament his indiscretion. Sir Isaac Newton, was not to be put out of countenance, by having a fools’-cap placed upon his head; and the youth who had dishonoured himself by attempting so to dishonour him, had not only the sense soon to see his error, but the grace to acknowledge it in the best way, by remodelling his honest sentiments; purging them of all the exuberance of satire, and publishing them

in a new tract, entitled “A fair, candid, and impartial State of the Case between Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Hutchinson.” Mr. Jones, with a natural bias to the Hebrew etymologist against the profound reasoner of the school of Bacon, observes that in this Essay “the merits of the cause are very judiciously stated between the two parties ; in consequence of which a reader will distinguish, that Newton may be of sovereign skill in measuring forces, as a mathematician ; and yet that Hutchinson may be right in assigning causes as a physiologist.” After a lapse of fourscore years since this vexatious problem was thus solved by a young man of two-and-twenty, (Horne’s age at the time when his second pamphlet appeared,) the mere fact, that the sovereignty of Newton’s mathematical skill is yet acknowledged, while Hutchinson’s physiological speculations are scarcely remembered, and must be sought for, like the living among the dead, in the sepulchres of his obsolete volumes,—this, if it do not set the question itself at rest, may set the heart of the Christian at rest respecting it, till some spirit yet uncreated shall bring new light into the world, to dispel “the darkness visible,” which has involved the dispute from the beginning. The zeal and piety, combined with the extraordinary learning and searching intellect of Mr. Hutchinson, must ever be honoured ; but if the way of salvation were not more clearly

manifested in the uncontroverted portions of holy writ, than the philosophy of the universe is in the Hebraisms of the Pentateuch, who could be saved ?

As for the alarm which some good persons feel at the progress of science, its actual discoveries and the imagined peril of pursuing them,—of what has the believer in the gospel to be afraid ? The book of nature, however minutely read and explored, cannot invalidate the book of revelation. No truth can contradict another truth. It is one of the strongest incidental proofs of the authenticity of the divine records, that, though delivered long before the most extraordinary discoveries were made in every department of natural history, no fact, clearly ascertained in the latter, has disproved any fact, clearly stated in the former. What is true must stand true for ever. What is false must as surely perish ;—lapse into oblivion, having served only a temporary purpose, fall by another falsehood, or by an antagonist truth, or perpetrate suicide, self-slain by involving a contradiction. Truth is never to be dreaded in the cause of truth ; it ought, therefore, never to be blinked or suppressed ; though particular portions of it are only to be asserted on due occasions.

Mr. Horne was of opinion that all Grecian philosophy led to materialism. To what else could it lead without revelation ? The circumstance itself is evidence of the reality of the latter, the doc-

trines, the principles, the discoveries, the motives of which man could never have invented. The glory of humility, the beauty of holiness, the perfect love which casteth out fear—no trace of these can be found in all the mythology, philosophy, and poetry of antiquity. The eternal power and Godhead of the one true Jehovah, it never entered into the mind of man to conceive. Beyond the vulgar faith in idols of wood and stone, or the more refined sentimentality of those who looked beyond the images to the powers of nature, which, in their primal and simplest state, these works of men's hands represented, the wise and the good, or those who aimed to be such, could imagine nothing better than the blind, deaf, dead, nay, unexistent divinity, named Fate, necessitating all things, and to which gods not less than mortals were subjected. In man, therefore, almost nothing noble was left, except the unconquerable will, which Fate itself could not control, though it might torment, distract, and destroy the victim of its persecution. The highest heathen virtue then was exercised hopelessly; and despair was exalted into heroic grandeur, by maintaining a protracted struggle against what would inevitably triumph over it, with the sole consolation that this could only be achieved by death, and that captivity was impossible. But though Grecian philosophy thus led to materialism, because it was without

revelation ; it was surely a rash conclusion, and it has proved to be an unwarranted one, that modern science, pursued by induction, facts being the arguments and the arguments facts,—and neither the one nor the other received till fully authenticated,—should lead to the like error ; when, respecting ‘the invisible things of God,’ we have testimony, which no physical phenomena can impeach, any more than man by the investigation of the latter could have discovered the former. Give us but the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, both in philosophy and in divinity ; let knowledge, not ignorance, and least of all wilful ignorance, be the mother of devotion ;—and then, neither science nor revelation will stand in any other opposition than as the lesser and the greater lights, which God has equally lent to man, to lead his rational creature to himself.

Mr. Horne, from that time forward, though frequently engaged in controversy, became a rare pattern of what every polemical writer ought to be ;—never transgressing the bounds of what one of the most acute but irritable of critics (the late Gilbert Wakefield) humourously denominated “due Christian animosity.” How far that portentous phrase meant something more than due Christian charity, it might be a breach of the latter to decide, by the animation with which that ingenious scholar attacked or defended opinions

favoured or impugned by himself. Certain, however, it is, that in too many cases, on both sides, the disputes of good men themselves on the most sacred subjects, are carried on with so much less of due Christian charity as positively to exceed the bounds (whatever those may be) of "due Christian animosity." Even towards such deceivers as Toland and Tindal, Hume and Voltaire, with the whole herd of "Epicurus' stye," that snort, and turn to rend those who cast before them what is more precious than rubies, 'the pearl of great price,' while they trample it under foot,—not forbearance only and courteousness should be shown, but so much of the meekness and gentleness of Christ as may be consistent with earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. In this spirit Mr. Horne was ever wont to meet the sceptics and scorers of his day, and while he thus kept master of himself no combatant could ever hope to obtain the mastery over him.

In 1753, in his twenty-fourth year, he was ordained by the Bishop of Oxford; and thenceforward, with heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, he devoted himself to the duties of a minister of the gospel, making all other occupations secondary. One of his earliest sermons was delivered before a metropolitan audience, from the awakening text, 'Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him;

and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.' Rev. i. 7. Thus he commenced his ministry, like John the Baptist, by preparing the way of the Lord for his second coming, as his prototype had done for the first. "The testimony of the clergyman whose pulpit he occupied on this occasion," says Mr. Jones, "ought never to be forgotten by a writer of his life." He was so affected and overpowered by the discourse, its subject, its composition, and its delivery, that, though pre-eminent himself in the same way, he said emphatically to the biographer, "George Horne is, without exception, the first preacher in England." Of course he rose rapidly into reputation for his preaching talents; and even in his own university, when his subject, (an appointed one,) before its learned members, was expressly upon the mission of John the Baptist, it is recorded that "he pleased the audience very much by his manner and style, and all agreed that he had *a very fine imagination.*" This was not the praise which he coveted; the honour that cometh not from men but from God, it was his heart's desire and prayer to obtain. He would rather be the shower that waters the earth and renders it fruitful after many days, though itself be instantly absorbed in the soil, than 'the bow in the cloud,' which attracts the admiration of all eyes, yet after a little while passes away, leaving neither trace

nor influence behind. He laboured, therefore, so to expound to his audiences (whether of the learned or the common people) the things concerning Christ, that he ‘ought to have suffered and to enter into his glory,’—that, at parting, they should be constrained to break forth into the language of the disciples at Emmaus, ‘Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?’ Nor did he so labour in vain; many of his sermons, which have been published, while they show that he ‘preached not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord,’ will long continue to warm, exhort, instruct, comfort, and encourage readers of all classes, into whose hands they may fall; while they may serve as models to future ministers of the gospel, to deliver their own souls, in their endeavours to save the souls of others. By watching seasons, opportunities, local circumstances, and temporary occurrences, he acquired a peculiar felicity of adapting his subjects of discourse to these, and thereby rendering the doctrines, duties, and illustrations which he educed, personally interesting to his hearers. In this respect, as in every other, he tried to tread in the steps of his Lord and Master, who, wherever He was, thus suited his addresses to his disciples, to the mixed multitude, to publicans and sinners, to the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, the righteous in their own esteem,—in the

open fields, on the sea-shore, or the mountain-slope; by the highway-side, in the streets of the city, within the walls of the temple, or under the roof of hospitality; so that, from the matter of each, the time, the place, and the character of his auditors might, in many cases, be gathered without historical record.

Of all Mr. Horne's controversial writings, his masterpiece undoubtedly is the little volume of "Letters on Infidelity." These were drawn forth by the revival of Hume's comfortless doctrines, by one of his anonymous disciples, after the death of their author, and the frigidly ostentatious betrayal of his drivelling, during his last hours, by his friend Dr. Adam Smith. The end of that philosopher, who had sought truth as a man would sally out to seek mountains, with a pair of microscopic spectacles on his nose, so magnifying the minutest objects, that he could not distinguish an horizon of more than an inch diameter at once, nor in less than twelve months scrutinize the length, breadth, thickness, colour, shape, weight, superficies, and solid contents, to say nothing of the number of component atoms, of the first molehill in his way,—the end of that philosopher, we say, produced as much uncertainty respecting the true nature, and even the true circumstances of it, as he himself had ever entertained of the plainest matter of fact in the world, concerning

which he might never have been able to go beyond the point of ascertaining the objections against the probabilities of its existence; having carried scepticism to such exquisite perfection, that he was *almost* sure of nothing except that he doubted of every thing. Statements very contradictory to each other were circulated, respecting the petty magnanimity of which his disciples boasted, and the bitter misgivings which others, better acquainted with the deceitfulness of the human heart, suspected to be betrayed by the levity with which he met his last enemy. The former, however, exulted over it as the triumph of philosophy, to enjoy rather than to suffer death,—not with firmness and composure, not with resignation and hope, as the veriest infidel would if he could,—but with the sportiveness of an infant playing with its mother till it falls asleep in her arms. Alas! the philosopher's forced gaiety, in a situation so awful, was far more like the ghastly merriment of the poor girl, whose mischievous companions had contrived to get a skeleton placed in her bed before she retired to rest; and who, when they stole into her chamber to witness the pleasant effects of the joke, saw her dandling the bundle of dry bones upon her lap, and laughing at their rude clattering and grotesque motions, in hysterical insanity. They, silly creatures, fled, shrieking with horror and amazement from the spectacle. The others, the

sage philosophers, joined their infatuated master in his hideous hilarity, and prolonged the melancholy contagion, by blazoning the secrets of the chamber where he met his fate, after he had disappeared in that darkness, (happily impermeable to living eyes,) which veils alike the light of the beatific vision, and the blackness of darkness for ever,—into one or the other of which we believe that every spirit, when it leaves the body, is introduced, and thenceforward lost to mortals till the day of resurrection. Without laying any stress upon contemporary and even recent statements of the circumstances of these “last days of a philosopher,” (grievously at variance with the fooleries attested by Dr. Adam Smith,) it may be safely affirmed upon the authenticity of these alone, that Hume was one of the veriest triflers that ever deceived himself or imposed upon the world.

Horne’s “Letters on Infidelity,” may be pronounced unique in their kind; and they are specimens of what polemical writings ought to be in their spirit, if not in their manner; yet, both in their manner and their spirit, just what it became the learned, the facetious, the gentle, the devout, and the zealous-minded author, to make them on such an occasion. In their *spirit* they are manly, candid, discriminating, and courteous, mighty in argument, and splendid in illustration. As to *the manner*, (without disparagement,) that should

be restricted to cases which will admit the free use of lighter, keener, and more brilliant weapons than are commonly brought into such fields. It should be confined also to those combatants (for with them alone may such perilous edge-tools be safely entrusted) who have equal self-control, kindly feeling, and conscientious principle with Mr. Horne, added to the same accomplishments of fine wit, delicate humour, lively fancy, varied knowledge, critical acumen, and profound penetration, with which he was so eminently both armed and adorned. If Elijah, whom he quotes as an authority, for employing ironical language on a very awful occasion, could be thus merry and wise at the expense of fanatics, who were neither the one nor the other,—our Christian advocate, contending with cold-blooded sceptics, as malignant, if not as furious, and as impotent, if not as self-denying as the priests of Baal, when they leaped upon the altars, and cut themselves with knives till the blood gushed out,—our Christian advocate, thus contending for the faith of the gospel, might be allowed, at intervals, to use satire as harmless and beautiful as summer lightnings, playing in sunset-clouds, without audible thunders; as surely as it was lawful for him, in his zeal for the Lord of Hosts against the enemies of his Christ, to ride on the whirlwind, and direct the storm in the more vehement and energetic exercise of those greater powers which he brought to bear

upon them, in the hotter scenes of the discursive conflict. With the exception, perhaps, of two brief sallies, it would be difficult to point out any passage which the bishop that was to be might not have written in his future lawn sleeves, with the mitre on his head, and the crosier at his elbow. In the "Letters on Infidelity," the author literally exemplified those features in the character of the Christian gentleman, scholar, and divine, which are described in the first seven couplets of the last clause of the quotation from Cowper in a former page.

Mr. Horne's greatest and best work was commenced in 1758, and continued through twenty succeeding years, as he found time, strength, and encouragement to pursue it, amidst his numerous and anxious occupations. The idea of composing an evangelical Commentary on the Psalms was avowedly suggested to him by an expository Sermon on the Nineteenth Psalm, which his friend, the Rev. George Watson, had formerly preached before the university, and published soon afterwards. That he caught the mantle of his precursor, with a double portion of his spirit, the writer of this essay has personal experience to believe. When perusing, in regular series, our author's diversified work, after travelling and toiling with him through the difficulties of the Eighteenth Psalm, (one of the most elaborate and splendid of

the whole,) in which the commentator had to fight his way, by means of all his learning, ingenuity, and fervour of devotion, to make the refractory materials yield to his peculiar purpose of interpretation,—no sooner had the reader entered upon the nineteenth Psalm, than he seemed to have come under a benigner influence, to breathe a freer air; and see in a clearer element of light than before. The writer himself was at home in every verse; and though his expositions were as bold and imaginative as in his most exalted flights of prophetic anticipation of gospel-facts, gospel-doctrines, and gospel-blessings, he manifestly made better way, and more persuasively impressed his sentiments upon the understanding and the conscience, till neither the one nor the other could help yielding implicit consent to the whole argument, aided as it was by the conviction, that the writer himself believed he was speaking nothing but ‘the words of truth and soberness,’ though ‘with the tongue of men and of angels.’ But, till he arrived at the end, and was directed to the foot-note, the reader was little aware under what peculiar inspiration the notes on that fine Psalm had been composed. Here, as if conscious that he had gone beyond himself in felicity of execution, the author most gracefully, gratefully, and cordially states, in extenuation of his own surpassing merit, that, “if the reader shall have received any pleasure from pe-

rusing the comment on the foregoing Psalm, especially the first part of it, he is to be informed, that he stands indebted, on that account, to a discourse, entitled, "Christ the Light of the World," by the late Rev. George Watson, for many years the dear companion and kind director of the author's studies; in attending to whose agreeable and instructive conversation, he has often passed whole days together, and shall always have reason to number them among the best spent days of his life; whose death he can never think of without lamenting it afresh; and to whose memory he embraces with pleasure this opportunity to pay the tribute of a grateful heart." This is one of the most beautiful memorials in existence of an earthly friendship, long ere now (we humbly hope) consummated in heaven, and leaving a blessing behind it for the generation to come, wherever the words of the Commentary to which it is appended, like those of the Psalm itself, shall 'go forth to the ends of the world, and their line throughout all the earth.'

Though this may have been the quickening impulse to a mind prepared, and (if we may borrow a phrase from husbandry) tilled and cropped to receive it, the author himself might have found it impossible to trace the origin of his plan to the first hour, the first circumstance, and the first form, in which it commenced actual being in his own thought. The happy conception, and the gradual

“Evelopement within himself till the hour of travail
in the actual production of any work of genius—
especially of consecrated genius, which, adding to
the intellectual riches of the author’s own language,
adds to the means of happiness to the whole human
race—is ‘as if a man should cast seed into the
ground; and should sleep and rise, night and day,
and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth
not how.’ Mark, iv. 26, 27.

Considering the amenity of his temper, the copiousness of his imagination, the elegance of his style, and the fervour of his piety, it may appear remarkable that Mr. Horne did not devote himself more to poetry, (which had been the delight, not less than music, of his youth,) in which all those amiable qualities and shining accomplishments might have been advantageously exhibited, and have left imperishable memorials of what he was, in that form of literature, which, after all the disparagement cast upon it by “the economists and calculators” of our phlegmatic age, is the most enduring. But it may be questioned, whether he would ever have attained, in the divinest of human arts, a pre-eminence proportionate to that which he reached in prose. Certainly, it may be affirmed, that no versification of the Psalms—of all schemes the most likely to have tempted him to forego his Commentary for the purpose of accomplishing, would have so made its way, and maintained its

ground as that work, which it might thus have superseded, has done ; containing, as the latter does, all the beauties of imagery and graces of diction which he could have interwoven in a metrical vehicle of the Songs of Zion, but has more freely and felicitously blended with prose, which, from its familiar construction, is necessarily more perspicuous and intelligible to general readers.

There has not been a decidedly successful versification of the Psalms in our tongue, though in every age since the Reformation, by poets too of every order, from Sternhold to Milton, attempts have been made to turn portions of them into popular metre. The difficulty and the desirableness of the work are thus so plainly manifested, that, were not the latter a continual and irrepressible excitement to renew the trial, the former would be a perpetual and insurmountable discouragement. It may be presumed, therefore, that none of our countrymen have yet caught the right key in following these strains of inspiration, since there must be within the compass of the English language a style so powerful, harmonious, and flexible, as to accompany, with corresponding expression, every tone of the Hebrew lyre through all its hitherto inimitable modulations. Milton, Young, and Cowper have respectively shown, that the mightiest, the most eccentric, and the most sensitive minds can each, in diction of its own, and diction worthy

of the themes, give utterance to sacred truths, scriptural images, and devotional feelings. By them has religion been adorned and presented before the eyes of the world, like the bride in the Canticles, with such excelling loveliness, that even her despisers have been startled into admiration, and exclaimed, ‘Who is this that looketh forth like the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?’ It must be acknowledged, that not only in “Psalms,” but also in “Hymns and Spiritual Songs,” our literature is discreditably deficient of examples that will bear comparison, as effusions of genius, with the praises of their gods, which are the glory of Pagan verse in every age and every country where idolatry has prevailed. There is, however, among us, no lack of compositions in this class, which any Christian may sing with the spirit and with the understanding also; but in so few of these are found the light and perfection of poetry, that men of taste, who are generally men of the world, almost instinctively pass them by, as altogether unworthy even of examination. ‘Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?’ they say; and when it is answered, ‘Come and see,’ they will not; though, like him of old, who asked the same question, but on receiving the same invitation obeyed it, they might, had they done likewise, have ‘found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus

of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph ;—and found him even in structures of verse comparatively as mean as the stable in which the Redeemer was born, as coarse as the swaddling-clothes in which he was wrapt, and as rude as the manger in which he was laid—the palace, the regalia, and the throne of his humiliation. It may be sufficient for general use, that these things should be '*Holiness unto the Lord*', as the humblest utensils in the sanctuary were required to be of pure gold ;—but is it not meet and right, that the Lord should be worshipped in '*the beauty of holiness?*' and that those who, like Bezaleel, the son of Uri, and Aboliab, the son of Ahi-samach, with all that are wise-hearted, who have been filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting precious stones to set them, and in carving of timber, to make all that the Lord commanded for the furniture and adornment of the tabernacle in the wilderness, including the ark of the covenant itself, down to the holy garments for the priests, the anointing oil, and the sweet incense for the altar ;—is it not meet, and right, and the bounden duty also of those who are similarly endowed by the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, to call upon their souls, and to stir up all that is within them to bless his holy

name, in such strains of music and of song, as shall enable millions, to whom the like talents have not been entrusted, to stand up, and bless the Lord, in the same exalted, animating, and delightful lays ; thus giving glory to God in the highest on earth, as saints and angels do in heaven ?

There is little reason to regret that Mr. Horne did not thus devote his talents for the use of the Church, since there is little reason to believe that he would have supplied the lack of service in others, on this score. The relics of his verse which have been preserved are pleasing, ingenious, and, like every thing else from his hand, show the overflowing goodness of his heart, and the cheerful aspect of his piety. One of these is known by mutilated copies of it in Selections of Hymns. It is worth preserving at length, though few of the clauses are happy in the setting of the minute gems of thought which they contain. In reading it, one cannot help thinking how much better every stanza, except perhaps the first and the last, might have been constructed, with the very same ideas and figures found in each.

THE LEAF.

‘ We all do fade as a leaf.’—Isa. lxiv. 6.

SEE the leaves around us falling,
Dry and wither’d to the ground ;
Thus to thoughtless mortals calling,
In a sad and solemn sound.

Sons of Adam, once in Eden,
Blighted when like us he fell,
Hear the lecture we are reading,
'Tis, alas ! the truth we tell.

Virgins, much, too much presuming
On your boasted white and red,
View us, late in beauty blooming,
Numbered now among the dead.

Griping misers, nightly waking,
See the end of all your care ;
Fled, on wings of our own making,
We have left our owners bare.

Sons of honour, fed on praises,
Fluttering high, in fancied worth,
Lo ! the fickle air, that raises,
Brings us down to parent earth.

Learned sophs, in systems jaded,
Who for new ones daily call,
Cease, by us at length persuaded,
Every leaf must have its fall.

Youths, though yet no losses grieve you,
Gay in health and manly grace,
Let not cloudless skies deceive you,
Summer gives to autumn place.

Venerable sires, grown hoary,
Hither turn the unwilling eye,
Think, amidst your falling glory,
Autumn tells a winter nigh.

Yearly in our course returning,
Messengers of shortest stay,
Thus we preach this truth concerning,
' Heaven and earth shall pass away.'

On the tree of life eternal,
 Man, let all thy hope be staid,
 Which alone, for ever vernal,
 Bears a leaf that shall not fade.

In the lines on “Garrick’s Funeral Procession,” the first two stanzas are strikingly impressive ; and they are *quite enough* for the occasion ; the rest are *more*, and therefore *less*, because they detract from the dignity of these. From one of the most gorgeous pageants on record of living vanity over dead genius, contrasted with the most solemn interment that ever took place on this earth, when, in the person of the second Adam, was fulfilled the sentence pronounced upon the first, ‘ Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,’ that (having ‘the keys of death and the grave’) He might bring ‘life and immortality to light,’ by his glorious resurrection, the poet descends to a poor play of words upon ‘repentant David,’ (Garrick) and ‘David’s Son,’ (‘the Lord from heaven.’)

ON DAVID GARRICK’S FUNERAL PROCESSION.

THROUGH weeping London’s crowded streets,
 As Garrick’s funeral pass’d,
 Contending wits and nobles strove
 Who should forsake him last.

Not so the world behaved to *Him*
 Who came that world to save,
 By solitary Joseph borne,
 Unheeded, to the grave.

If what is done by mortals here
Departed spirits know,
Confused and blushing, Garrick views
This grand parade of woe.

Though much to be admired by man,
He had—yet gracious heaven !
Much, very much he had, indeed,
By thee to be forgiven.

But thou art good !—and since he died,
Composed, without a groan,
Repentant *David*, let us hope,
May live through *David's Son*.

What Bishop Horne (for so we must now designate him) has done for the Church and the world in his *Commentary on the Psalms*, may be regarded as the best that he could have done; and for edification, it is probably the best that has been done either in prose or verse by any man, on the same portion of holy writ. The original is the only expressly devotional book in the sacred Scriptures, and in it are found repeated references to the subjects of every other; it is *itself* a commentary on the whole Bible, including both Testaments; and he who reads our author's *Commentary* upon *it* will have, in beautiful epitome, the sum and substance both of the law and the gospel; a bird's-eye perspective of man's history from the creation to his redemption; and, ascending into 'the visions of God,' prophetic revelations of all that is most important to be known concerning the ages to come,

in providence and in grace, till the consummation of all things. Of the Psalms, so clear, concise, comprehensive, and diversified in their topics, it may be said emphatically, (as of all Scripture generally,) that they ‘ were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;—that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.’

Had this portion of sacred literature not been preserved, there would (so to speak) have been a certain defect in the volume of revealed truth, which might have been very imperfectly supplied by mere human formularies for private, social, or public worship; considering how few examples of the kind are afforded in other parts of the canon. As in all heathen mythology, ancient or modern, there is no approach to the Scriptural idea of the God whom we adore, so in all the strains of heathen poetry, in honour of those which were not gods, there are no sentiments of awe, love, veneration, fear, or gratitude expressed, like those which breathe in the Psalms; no ascriptions of honour, might, majesty, and dominion, like those which the Psalms ever give unto the Lord; no penitential confessions, no prayers for mercies, no thanksgivings for benefits, no deprecations of wrath, no confidence declared in the wisdom, power, and goodness of their impotent divinities, like those of trust in the

Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting righteousness and strength ; above all, there is no allusion the most remote, either in their ethics or their fables, to that ‘ holiness without which no man shall see the Lord,’ nor the slightest recognition of the duty of worshipping Him who ‘ is a Spirit in spirit and in truth.’ Both in matter and in manner, the Book of Psalms consists of a series of the most original, distinct, and extraordinary poetical compositions that are to be found (with the exception of the prophecies, which indeed belong to the same class) in the literature of any age or country. And when we recollect that these were produced, for the most part, antecedently to the noble remains of classical song, among a people comparatively illiterate, and held in contempt in after times by the philosophical Greeks and Romans, as they had formerly been by the superstitious Egyptians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans, it can hardly be denied by the most perverse sceptic, that ‘ holy men of God’ in these ‘ wrote as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost:’ seeing that they are so infinitely superior to the master-pieces, in the same style, of the wisest, most gifted, and most refined of heathen nations in *their* religious literature ; superior in the knowledge of God, the only God that *can* be ; superior in their discernment of things most intellectual as well as divine,—the principles of piety appealing to the understanding not less than to the affections. And

these compositions, so sublime in imagery, so graceful in diction, so pure in sentiment, and so fervent in devotion, appeared at an early era of the civilized world's authentic annals, while Greece was yet semi-barbarian, and Rome was unbuilt, among a people who never had, either then or afterwards, (though existing to this day,) any other literature, to be compared with these in simplicity, majesty, or beauty, whether historical, poetical, didactic or prophetic ; the writings of the Jewish rabbis of every age, with few exceptions, being notoriously puerile, destitute of taste, defective in morality, and superficial in ordinary every-day knowledge. The apocryphal penmen, though paragraphs of great excellence occur occasionally in their pages, rarely approach to the true Scriptures, even in those points which are equally common to profane and sacred literature.

The distinguishing feature of the Book of Psalms among the other Scriptures, is its devotional character. It furnishes examples, multiform in each kind, of the style, the spirit, the feelings, and the language in which man may approach his Maker, his Sovereign, and his Judge, through faith in a Mediator,—as a sinner or as a saint, as a suppliant, as a giver of thanks, as a recorder of deliverances, as a witness of God's faithfulness, as a preacher of righteousness ;—in a word, under every circumstance, situation, or contingency, personal

or relative, bodily or mental, private or public, joyous or grievous, in which comfort can be needed, council sought, evils are to be deprecated, or blessings to be implored, for a few or for many, for an individual or a family, for a neighbourhood, a nation, or for the whole world, including its living inhabitants of every country, colour, and tongue, with their unborn posterity to the end of time, and through the ages of eternity. But not only does man address God in these inspired exercises, but God himself speaks to man in many passages of the same; expounding his laws, his statutes, his testimonies, his commandments, his fear, and his judgments, that they are ‘perfect, converting the soul,—sure, making wise the simple,—right, rejoicing the heart,—pure, enlightening the eyes,—clean and enduring for ever,—true and righteous altogether.’ Sometimes he denounces *vengeance* against impenitent transgressors, with ‘the voice of words,’ as terrible as the tones of ‘the trumpet waxing louder and louder,’ at which Moses himself did ‘exceedingly fear and quake,’ on ‘the mount that burned with fire.’ Again, he promises blessings and rewards to the righteous; length of life, hope in death, fulness of joy in his presence, and at his right hand pleasures for evermore. The Son of God, too, the Redeemer of man, here incarnates himself, (by anticipation of the fulness of time,) and rehearses the very language which he

uttered a thousand years afterwards on the cross, ‘My God ! my God ! why hast thou forsaken me?’—‘Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit ;’—while the Holy Ghost, who spake in these oracles by the mouth of the prophets, as expressly foretels the glories of Messiah’s reign, when ‘ all kings shall fall down before Him ; all nations shall serve him :—men shall be blessed in Him ; all nations shall call Him blessed.’

In the foregoing and many other ways, by means of these models of devotion,—this scale of intercourse between time and eternity,—man goes out of himself in the spirit to meet God, and God, in compassion to the creature’s infirmities, humbles himself to meet man. On this same ladder,—like that in the patriarch’s dream, planted on earth but resting on heaven,—prayers and praises, like *ascending*, and blessings and benefits like *descending* angels, have been rising in one form, and returning in the other, without intermission, since these songs of the sweet singer of Israel and his brethren, to the close of the captivity, were successively received by the Jewish church, and with yet more experience of their beneficent application, have been adopted by the church of Christ gathered from among the Gentiles. And to the end of all things below, it may be predicted, that by devout believers, by penitent transgressors, by mourning and by rejoicing souls, these sacred melodies will

be the language most familiar on earth, and oftenest heard in heaven, from this province of the dominions of the King of kings, of all the colloquiations of human words, and all the expressions of human sentiments, recorded or to be compiled from the creation to the day of judgment. Nay, of the only book that will outlast all the books in the world,—the only book, probably, that will ever be translated into all the dialects of the earth, and (if it be not too awful to say so) translated also into those, respectively, of the saints in light and of the lost for ever; whose memories, like the scroll of Ezekiel, written within and without, will be themselves ineffaceable transcripts of its contents; of *that* book, this precious portion, through eternity, will supply the burden of some of the sweetest songs of the redeemed, of which its strains have been the preludes; while not a few of its passages must be delightfully interwoven with the many-coloured web of their intricate reminiscences of all the way by which the Lord their God had led them through the wilderness of this world to the Canaan of the next.

Another sweet and solemnizing association, in the minds of Christians yet on their journey to the promised land of rest, is, that these sacred compositions were so often on the lips of their Redeemer, in his discourses abroad, that it cannot be doubted that the things concerning Himself in them were

the themes of his thought, the words of his mouth, and the meditations of his heart, when, as He was wont, He withdrew from the multitude, and retired into some desert-place, to hold communion with his Heavenly Father,—when, at other times, He was found, in the evening, alone on the shore, after a day of hard toil,—or when, having nowhere to lay his head, He went up into a mountain apart to pray, and continued all night in prayer unto God. The acknowledged use which our Saviour made (and in which the apostles and evangelists followed his example) of the Psalms, by interpreting many portions, which primarily referred to David, into predictions concerning Himself,—affords ground for justification of the principal feature of Bishop Horne's Commentary on these prophetic writings,—namely, their spiritual and final exhibition of the character and actions of a suffering and triumphant Messiah. In thus allegorizing some statements and circumstances, which on the face of them appear to be purely literal in the personal experience of the psalmist himself, whether David, Asaph, or any other, Bishop Horne, it must be acknowledged, has gone as far as the utmost licence that can be granted for such accommodation; though, on the whole, he has manifested a sober judgment, exercised a sound discretion, and qualified the spirit of his commentary so well to suit the letter of the text, that

it cannot be said he has often been too rash or too fanciful a paraphrast.—The cases, in which, to the present writer, he appears to have too freely extorted a hidden sense from plain words, are when he imputes language to the Saviour which seems to belong solely to the sinner, under the idea, that the former, standing in the stead of the latter, and under the imputation of his offences, confesses them as his own, and acknowledges the justice of the sentence which condemns Him to suffer as though He had been actually guilty of them, rather than as one paying the penalty for those who had been so. Unless we had inspired authority for such an appliance of rules of interpretation, which, at best, are questionable even on points less revolting to men's ordinary judgment than this, the practice had, at least, better forbore. Bishop Horne, no doubt, like others of his learned as well as pious predecessors and contemporaries, was much influenced by the prevailing cast of opinions on this subject, when the doctrines of Hutchinson were at their height of reputation. That adventurous expounder of mysteries converts the Psalms into “an heroic tragedy, wherein the redemption of man is the plot, the hero Christ, the scene of action the whole created system; the time, from before the creation to the consummation of all things. But the largest part of this mysterious drama is laid upon earth, and refers to the person of *the Irradiator with us*,”

&c. He has left commentaries on many of the Psalms to illustrate this theory, in which it may be questioned whether he does not introduce 'darkness visible,' where there was light before; and maketh that to be 'without form and void,' in which harmony, beauty and life had prevailed.

Bishop Horsley, whose translations of many of the Psalms were published after his decease, sanctions by his avowal and example the precedents of Hutchinson and Horne, far exceeding the latter, and fully equalling the former in the boldness of his conjectural discoveries. He says, "There is not a page in the Book of Psalms, in which the pious reader, will not find his Saviour, if he reads with a view of finding Him; and it was but a just encomium of it, that came from the pen of one of the early fathers, that it is *a complete system of divinity for the use and edification of the common people of the Christian Church.*" Let us try this by an example of the Bishop's own analysis of the twenty-fifth Psalm. "In the first twelve verses, *the Man Christ Jesus* (or in the Hutchinsonian phraseology, *the Humanity of Christ*,) prays to the *Trinity*. In the first three to *the Word*, to which *the Humanity* was united for support; in the fourth and fifth to the *Holy Spirit*, to instruct and guide Him; in the sixth, seventh, and eighth to *God the Father* to spare Him. The imputed guilt of man, in verse seventh, He speaks of as his own, because it was

imputed to Him. But what, it may be asked, were the trespasses and disobediences of the Messiah's youth, which He requests not to be remembered? I agree with Mr. Hutchinson, that (these) sins may be the sins *juniorum*, of his younger brethren, *i. e.* the Christians." Bishop Horne's annotations on this very Psalm are among the most edifying in his volumes, without the slightest tincture of mysticism or elaborate subtilization. But if the hypothesis of Hutchinson, so authoritatively adopted by Horsley, and exemplified in chivalrous defiance of all unsophisticated reasoning as well as feeling on the subject, in this instance, be admitted as the true mode of interpreting the Hebrew text, who can be sure of the true meaning of any disputed passages, since fifty persons as learned in the original as Hutchinson, as pious as Horne, and as mighty in the Scriptures as Horsley, may differ from each other respecting it upon *infallible* critical principles, for where the *literal meaning* is not in some way the fact-meaning, what other meaning may not be made of it, when every primitive word, in the original (as the writer of this was once assured by a sincere Hutchinsonian) is a *Cyclopaedia*, and may have manifold significations. Yet we are gravely told, that the Hebrew, being a language of ideas, not of conventional signs, can never mislead the interpreter of it; and the Arabic has been disparaged by this class of scholars, because it has a *hundred nay five hun-*

dred words for one thing, and must therefore be a Babel of confusion. Granting this, of what superiority for communicating clear intelligence can that language boast, in which *one word* may mean *a hundred, nay five hundred things*, from the paucity of radicals and the multiplicity of ramifications? The Old Testament, instead of being, in its plain passages, what ‘he that runneth may read,’ must be a book of hieroglyphics, of which the original key having been lost, conjectural picklocks alone can be employed to open its arcana. Like a time-piece without hands, though it be so correct that the longitude might be ascertained by it in any part of the globe, yet even the hour of the day cannot be known, while every second of every minute is distinctly recorded by its ticking; even so would the word of God be a book with seven seals upon it, which no man could open. How then could that portion of it entitled the Psalms be “*a whole system of divinity for the common people of the Christian Church?*”

The Psalms authenticate the books of Moses, and the other historical records to the age of David. There are few allusions to any subsequent events, from the reign of Solomon to the captivity; but the melancholy memorials of the latter, and the joyful ones of the restoration of the Jews to their own land are numerous, and as full of pathos, power, and sublimity, according to the theme, as

most of the more ancient compositions. These inspired strains of poetry were thus produced at successive eras, and in process of time became so numerous and so admirably diversified as to suit every season and circumstance for which devotional verse can be desired. They may be read in the closet, in the family, or in the great congregation, and wherever they may be read they may be sung likewise. David delighted in music, and even invented for himself instruments of harmony wherewith to praise the Lord. No profanation of a noble, innocent, and exquisite art can be urged as a legitimate argument against the sanctified use of it; and that this may be so sanctified we have both precedent and exhortation again and again in these pages of the divine oracles. How happily the poetry of the Psalms may be married to music even of our days, there are numerous examples in church anthems, and other choral pieces called sacred, because adapted to words of holy writ. As a poem, had the hundred and fourth Psalm been found in the Greek anthology, how would it have been extolled by critics as the most perfect specimen of lyric song, in classical records—the most precious relic of antiquity in its kind, for the symmetry of its parts, the beauty of its imagery, the splendour of its diction, and the diversity of its subjects, embracing the whole of the phenomena of nature, by day and by night, the living and the dead creatures of

almighty power, their destruction and renovation, the economy of Providence, natural death and the renewal of life; by the sovereign dispensations of one only eternal, all-wise, and all gracious Being. Had Handel, instead of wasting his wonderful harmonies, and his inimitable melodies, on verbiage unworthy of them, in his rhyming oratorios,—had Handel set this Psalm, from beginning to end, to such music as he only could compose, and compose only when inspired himself by the language of inspiration, he might indeed have produced a worthy companion-piece to his own unrivalled *Messiah*. The plan of this divine ode is perfect; every link in the chain of circumstances is consecutive, progressive, and occupying its own peculiar place; at the same time the transitions are so admirable, that while nothing can be more natural, the whole is the consummation of art, hiding itself like light, which reveals every thing but its own identity. Take one section, from the nineteenth to the twenty-fourth verse inclusive:—‘ He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down: *Thou* makest darkness and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth:—the young lions roar after their prey and seek their meat from God:—the sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens: **MAN GOETH FORTH UNTO HIS WORK AND LABOUR TILL EVENING: O LORD!** how mani-

fold are thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of thy goodness."—Who that has any music in his soul cannot imagine the possibility of strains of vocal and instrumental concords, which might be composed on the scenes and subjects presented in these poetic and pictorial verses equal, though not similar, except in character and kindred climax—to Haydn's magnificent conception of his overture of Chaos to the Creation, followed by that triumph of music,—that bursting, spreading, towering harmony of sounds, at the words, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' which overwhelms the listener, till he almost shuts his ears from intensity of delight, as he would have shut his eyes from the overpowering effulgence, had he seen the first created beam springing out of the womb of unessential night, and diffusing itself through infinite space.

The proper limits of this Preliminary Essay (which have been already exceeded) forbid further expatiation on the character of particular parts of the Book of Psalms. The reader will find abundance of discriminative as well as elegant strictures on these, regarded as literary compositions, in Bishop Horne's Commentary. This, without being curiously critical, or learnedly elaborate, to perplex ordinary readers, is accompanied in the body of the text of the authorized version, with such occasional new renderings of the Hebrew phraseology as throw

real light upon passages either imperfect in the translation as it stands, or obscure in the original; the Commentator, with consummate good sense, pure taste, and conscientious scrupulosity, always preferring, amidst a choice of difficult readings, that which tended most to edification, and was likely to prevent false impressions of the actual sentiments of the writer, or of the justice, mercy, and truth of God Himself, as in the apparent imprecations of vengeance upon the Psalmist's enemies, his avowals of perfect hatred against them, and his protestations, in some places, of perfect righteousness in himself. The whole work is evangelical in its spirit and in its influence. Scripture is employed as the interpreter of Scripture, and while the Old Testament is made to foreshadow the New, the New is made to reflect upon the Old, all the glory of life and immortality brought to light by the gospel. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, is revealed in creation, in providence, in redemption, in judgment, in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, in the grace of his humiliation while He dwelt on earth, in the equity of his mediatorial reign, and finally in the power, might, majesty, and dominion which will be the infinite and everlasting reward for the travail of his soul, when He shall have put all enemies under his feet, and with

which he shall be satisfied, when he has gathered his elect from every country under heaven, and through all ages of time.

The Bishop, in the true spirit of the sacramental collect of his church, *began, continued, and ended*, this work to the glory of God's holy name, *with prayer*. Writing to his friend, Mr. Jones, when he had just entered upon it, he says, " May He who hath the key of David prosper it in my hand, granting me the knowledge and utterance necessary to make it serviceable to the Church!" In the course of it, in the midst of his comments he frequently breaks out into fervent ejaculations of prayer or thanksgiving, well worthy of being treasured up in the reader's mind, for personal use, or as models on which to frame the expressions of his own aspirations of desire, hope, love, gratitude, for mercies promised or received, as may suit his own feelings, or circumstances at the time. He concludes the whole thus humbly yet triumphantly : "*Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord!*" With this wish the sweet Psalmist of Israel closes the songs of Zion. With the same wish, the Author desires to close these meditations upon them ; giving thanks to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, by whose most gracious favour and aid they have been begun, continued and ended; and humbly praying, that no errors or improprieties

from which, through human infirmities, during the course of a long work, the most diligent and careful are not exempt, may prevent his labours from contributing, in some small degree, to promote the improvement and consolation of the redeemed, the honour and glory of the Redeemer, *who is the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star!*"

Let then the reader of these meditations on a portion of God's holy word, peculiarly practical and personal, adopt from the beginning, throughout the progress, and to the end, the pious Author's prayers, which were abundantly answered to himself in his labours, and will, in like manner, be answered to all who, in sincerity and truth, employ them for their own edification. Then shall the promise to faithful Abraham be fulfilled to both. He has been blessed, and he will be made a blessing to them.

J. M.

Sheffield, June 22.



**MEMOIR
OF
BISHOP HORNE,
BY THE
REV. WILLIAM JONES,
LATE OF NAYLAND**

[THE much-esteemed writer of the following Memoir, was born at Lowick in Northamptonshire, July 30th, 1726. He early distinguished himself by a love of learning ; and having been sent to the Charter-house, under the patronage of the Duke of Dorset, and subsequently, to University College, Oxford, he well fulfilled the expectations which had been formed of him at the commencement of his studies. It was at Oxford that he became acquainted with the venerable Author of the Commentary on the Book of Psalms. The friendship there commenced continued through many years ; and a long series of useful labours contributed equally to the happiness and spiritual improvement of both. Mr. Jones took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1749, and shortly after entered holy orders. His talents, his learning and piety, would have shone in any station to which he might have been called ; but he obtained only sufficient professional preferment to secure him from the approaches of necessity. The perpetual curacy of Nayland in Suffolk, with the living of Paston in Northamptonshire, were all the rewards which he received for exertions in the cause of the Church which had been acknowledged as of the highest value by ministers of state, bishops, and archbishops. But he had the best reward for which so wise and holy a man can strive—the uniform testimony of the world and of his flock to the usefulness of his labours. Mr. Jones wrote many works, but his Sermons, and the Tract on the Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity, are those by which he is best known. His death took place at Nayland, shortly after he had reached his seventy-third year.]



MEMOIR
OR
BISHOP HORNE.

DOCTOR George Horne, late Bishop of Norwich, and for several years President of Magdalen College in Oxford, and Dean of Canterbury, was born at Otham, a small village near Maidstone in Kent, on the 1st of November, in the year 1730. His father was the Rev. Samuel Horne,¹ M.A., rector of Otham, a very learned and respectable clergyman, who for some years had been a tutor at Oxford. This gentleman had so determined with himself, to preserve the integrity of his mind against all temptations from worldly advantage, that he was heard to say, and used often to repeat it, he had rather be a toad-eater to a mountebank, than flatter any great man against his conscience. To this he adhered through the whole course of his life; a considerable part of which was spent in the education of his children, and in a regular performance of all the duties of his parish. He married a daughter of Bowyer Hendley, Esq. by whom he had seven children, four sons and three daughters. The eldest son died very young. The late

¹ He died in 1768, aged 75

bishop was the next. His younger brother, Samuel, was a fellow of University College ; where he died, greatly respected and lamented. He inherited the integrity of his father, and was an ‘ Israelite indeed,’ who never did or wished harm to any mortal. Yet his character was by no means of the insipid kind : he had much of the humour and spirit of his elder brother ; had a like talent for preaching ; and was well attended to as often as he appeared in the University pulpit. His death was announced to an intimate friend by his elder brother in the following short and pathetic letter :

“ My dear Friend, (No date.)

“ Last night, about half an hour past eight, it pleased God to take from us, by a violent fit of the stone in the gall-bladder, my dear brother Sam. He received the blessed sacrament, with my mother and myself, from the hands of Dr. Wetherell ; and, full of faith, with the most perfect resignation, departed in peace with God, the world, and himself. It is a heavy stroke to my poor mother ; but she and my sisters bear up with great fortitude. I have lost a very dear friend, and pleasant companion ! Pray for us—All join in every affectionate wish for the happiness of you and yours,
with
G. H.”

The youngest brother, the Rev. William Horne, was educated at Magdalen College in Oxford, and is the present worthy rector of Otham, in which he succeeded his father, as also in the more valuable rectory of Brede in the county of Sussex.

¹ The present Master of University College, and Dean of Hereford, &c.

Mr. Horne, the father of the family, was of so mild and quiet a temper, that he studiously avoided giving trouble on any occasion. This he carried so far, that, when his son George was an infant, he used to wake him with playing upon a flute ; that the change from sleeping to waking might be gradual and pleasant, and not produce an outcry ; which frequently happens when children are awakened suddenly. What impression this early custom of his father might make upon his temper, we cannot say : but certainly he was remarkable as he grew up, for a tender feeling of music, especially that of the church.

Under his father's tuition, he led a pleasant life, and made a rapid progress in Greek and Latin. But some well-meaning friend, fearing he might be spoiled by staying so long at home, advised the sending of him to school. To this his good father, who never was given to make much resistance, readily consented : and he was accordingly placed in the school at Maidstone, under the care of the Rev. Deodatus Bye, a man of good principles, and well learned in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew ; who, when he had received his new scholar, and examined him at the age of thirteen, was so surprised at his proficiency, that he asked him why he came to school, when he was rather fit to go from school ? With this gentleman he continued two years ; during which he added much to his stock of learning, and among other things a little elementary knowledge of the Hebrew, on the plan of Buxtorf, which was of great advantage to him afterwards. I am a witness to the high respect with which he always spoke of his master ; whom he had newly left, when my acquaintance with him first commenced

at University College, to which he was sent when he was little more than fifteen years of age. When servants speak well of a master or mistress, we are sure they are good servants: and when a scholar speaks well of his teacher, we may be as certain he is, in every sense of the word, a good scholar.

I cannot help recounting, on this occasion, that there was under the said Deodatus Bye another scholar, very nearly related to Mr. Horne, of whom the master was heard to say, that he never did any thing which he wished him not to have done. But, when the lad was told of this, he very honestly observed upon it, that he had done many things which his master never heard of. He is now in an office of great responsibility. They, who placed him in it, supposed him still to retain the honesty he brought with him from Maidstone school; and I never heard that he had disappointed them.

While Mr. Horne was at school, a Maidstone scholarship in University College became vacant; in his application for which he succeeded, and young as he was, the master recommended his going directly to College.

Soon after he was settled at University College, (where he was admitted on the 15th of March, 1745-6,) Mr. Hobson, a good and learned tutor of the house, gave out an exercise, for a trial of skill, to Mr. Horne and the present writer of his life, who was also in his first year. They were ordered to take a favourite Latin ode of Boëtius, and present it to the tutor in a different Latin metre. This they both did as well as they could: and the contest, instead of dividing, united them ever after, and had also the effect of inspiring them with a love for the lyric poetry of that author; which seems

not to be sufficiently known among scholars, though beautiful in its kind. The whole work was once in such esteem, that King Alfred, the founder of University College, and of the English constitution, translated it.

His studies, for a time, were in general the same with those of other ingenious young men ; and the vivacity of his mind, which never was exceeded, and made his conversation very desirable, introduced him to many gentlemen of his own standing, who resembled him in their learning and their manners, particularly to Mr. Jenkinson, now Earl of Liverpool, Mr. Moore, now Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Cracherode, Mr. Benson, the Honourable Hamilton Boyle, son of Lord Orrery, the late Rev. Jasper Selwin, and many others. Mr. Denny Martin, now Dr. Fairfax, of Leeds Castle, in Kent, was from the same school with Mr. Horne ; and has always been very nearly connected with him, as a companion of his studies, a lover of his virtues, and an admirer of his writings.

To show how high Mr. Horne's character stood with all the members of his college, old and young, I need only mention the following fact. It happened about the time when he took his bachelor's degree, which was on the 27th of October, 1749, that a Kentish fellowship became vacant at Magdalen College ; and there was, at that time, no scholar of the house who was upon the county. The senior fellow of University College, having heard of this, said nothing of it to Mr. Horne, but went down to Magdalen College, told them what an extraordinary young man they might find in University College, and gave him such a recommendation as disposed the society to accept of him.

When the day of election came, they found him such as he had been represented, and much more ; and in 1750 he was accordingly chosen a fellow of Magdalen College, and on the 1st of June, 1752, he took the degree of Master of Arts.

If we look back upon our past lives, it will generally be found, that the leading events, which gave a direction to all that followed, were not according to our own choice or knowledge, but from the hand of an overruling Providence, which acts without consulting us ; putting us into situations, which are either best for ourselves, or best for the world, or best for both ; and leading us, as it led the patriarch Abraham—of whom we are told, that he knew not whither he was going. This was plainly the case in Mr. Horne's election to Magdalen College. A person took up the matter, unsolicited and in secret : he succeeded. When fellow, his character and conduct gave him favour with the society, and, when Dr. Jenner died, they elected him president : the headship of the college introduced him to the office of vice-chancellor ; which at length made him as well known to Lord North, as to the Earl of Liverpool : this led to the Deanry of Canterbury, and that to the Bishopric of Norwich.

If we return to the account of his studies, we shall there find something else falling in his way which he never sought after, and attended with a train of very important consequences. While he was deeply engaged in the pursuits of oratory, poetry, philosophy, and history, and making himself well acquainted with the Greek tragedians, of which he was become a great admirer, an accident, of which I shall relate the account as plainly and faithfully as I can, without disguising or diminish-

ing, drew him into a new situation in respect of his mind, and gave a new turn to his studies, before he had arrived at his bachelor's degree. I may indeed say of this, that it certainly gave much of the colour which his character assumed from that time, and opened the way to most of his undertakings and publications; as he himself would witness if he were now alive.

It is known to the public, that he came very early upon the stage as an author, though an anonymous one, and brought himself into some difficulty under the denomination of an Hutchinsonian; for this was the name given to those gentlemen who studied Hebrew and examined the writings of John Hutchinson, Esq. the famous Mosaic philosopher, and became inclined to favour his opinions in theology and philosophy.

About the time of which I am speaking, there were many good and learned men of both universities, but chiefly in and of the University of Oxford, who, from the representation given to the public, some years before, by the Right Honourable Duncan Forbes, then Lord President of the Court of Session in Scotland, and from a new and more promising method of studying the Hebrew language, independently of Jewish error; and from a flattering prospect also of many other advantages to the general interests of religion and learning, were become zealous advocates in favour of the new scheme of Mr. Hutchinson. Mr. Horne was led into this enquiry, partly by an accident which had happened to myself.

An attachment to some friends, then well known in the University for their abilities in music, of whom the principal were, Mr. Phocion Henley

of Wadham College, Mr. Pixel of Queen's, and Mr. Short of Worcester, drew me often to Wadham College; which society has two Hebrew scholarships, on one of which there was a gentleman, a Mr. Catcott of Bristol, whose father, as I afterwards understood, was one of those authors who first distinguished themselves as writers on the side of Mr. Hutchinson: he possessed a very curious collection of fossils, some of which he had digged and scratched out of the earth with his own hands at the hazard of his life; a pit near Wadham College, which would have buried him, having fallen in very soon after he was out of it. This collection¹ I was invited to see, and readily accepted the invi-

¹ It is now deposited in the public library at Bristol, to the corporation of which city he left that and his MSS. on a principle of gratitude for the preferment they had given him; and there I saw it in the year 1790, with many large and valuable additions.

Of the collector it may be truly said, that he was not only an Hebraean in his learning, but an Israelite in life and manners. To his industry we owe a Treatise on the Deluge, which, when compared with many others, will be found to give the best and most curious information upon the subject. This good and innocent man, whose heart was well affected to all mankind, died before his time; and the manner of his death, if it has been truly reported, will raise the indignation of every sensible and charitable mind. He kept his bed with a bad fever; and, when rest was necessary, he was disturbed by the continual barking of a dog that was chained up near at hand. When his friends sent a civil message, desiring that the dog might be removed till the patient was better, it was refused; and, in the event, he was fairly barked to death. If this fact be true, how cheap are the lives and sufferings of some men in the estimation of others!—Hercule! homini plurima ex homine sunt mala!—for the dog intended no harm.—Of this gentleman himself, we are informed by one of his intimate friends, that, when he settled his account at the year's end, he considered all the money that remained after his own debts were paid, as the property not of himself but of the poor, to whose use (being a single man) he never failed to apply it.

tation, out of a general curiosity, without any particular knowledge of the subject. This gentleman, perceiving my attention to be much engaged by the novelty and curiosity of what he exhibited, threw out so many hints about things of which I had never heard, that I requested the favour of some further conversation with him on a future occasion. One conference followed another, till I saw a new field of learning opened, particularly in the department of natural history, which promised me so much information and entertainment, that I fell very soon into the same way of reading. Dr. Woodward the physician, who had been a fellow-labourer with Hutchinson, and followed very nearly the same principles, had made the natural history of the earth, and the diluvian origination of extraneous fossils, so agreeable and so intelligible, that I was captivated by his writings: and from them I went to others taking what I found, with a taste and appetite, which could not, at that time, make such distinctions as I may have been able to make since. In the simplicity of my heart, I communicated some of the novelties, with which my mind was now filled, to my dear and constant companion, Mr. Horne, from whom I seldom concealed any thing; but found him very little inclined to consider them; and I had the mortification to see, that I was rather losing ground in his estimation. Our college-lectures on geometry and natural philosophy (which were not very deep) we had gone through with some attention, and thought ourselves qualified to speak up for the philosophy of Newton. It was therefore shocking to hear, that attraction was no physical principle, and that a *vacuum* never had been, and never would be demonstrated. Here

therefore Mr. Horne insisted, that if Sir I. Newton's philosophy should be false in these principles, no philosophy would ever be true. How it was objected to, and how it was defended, I do not now exactly remember; I fear, not with any profound skill on either side; but this I well recollect, that our disputes, which happened at a pleasant season of the year, kept us walking to and fro in the quadrangle till past midnight. As I got more information for myself, I gained more upon my companion: but I have no title to the merit of forming him into what he afterwards proved to be.

In the same college with us, there lived a very extraordinary person. He was a classical scholar of the first rate, from a public school, remarkable for an unusual degree of taste and judgment in poetry and oratory; his person was elegant and striking, and his countenance expressed at once both the gentleness of his temper and the quickness of his understanding. His manners and address were those of a perfect gentleman: his common talk, though easy and fluent, had the correctness of studied composition: his benevolence was so great, that all the beggars in Oxford knew the way to his chamber-door: upon the whole, his character was so spotless, and his conduct so exemplary, that mild and gentle as he was in his carriage towards them, no young man dared to be rude in his company. By many of the first people in the university he was known and admired: and it being my fortune to live in the same staircase with him, he was very kind and attentive to me, though I was much his junior: he often allowed me the pleasure of his conversation, and sometimes gave me the benefit of his advice, of which I knew

the meaning to be so good, that I always heard it with respect, and followed it as well as I could. This gentleman, with all his other qualifications, was a reader of Hebrew, and a favourer of Mr. Hutchinson's philosophy; but had kept it to himself, in the spirit of Nicodemus; and, when I asked him the reason of it afterwards, and complained of the reserve with which he had so long treated me in this respect; "Why," said he, "these things are in no repute; the world does not receive them; and you, being a young man, who must keep what friends you have, and make your fortune in the world, I thought it better to let you go on in your own way, than bring you into that embarrassment which might be productive of more harm than good, and embitter the future course of your life: besides, it was far from being clear to me, how you would receive them, and then I might have lost your friendship." It was now too late for such a remonstrance to have any effect; I therefore, on the contrary, prevailed upon him to become my master in Hebrew, which I was very desirous to learn: and in this he acquitted himself with so much skill and kind attention, writing out for me with his own hand such grammatical rules and directions as he judged necessary, that in a very short time I could go on without my guide. I remember however, that I had nearly worked myself to death, by determining, like Duns Scotus in the Picture-Gallery, to go through a whole chapter in the Hebrew before night.

To this gentleman, whose name was George Watson, I recommended Mr. Horne, at my departure from Oxford; and they were so well pleased

with each other, that Mr. Horne, instead of going home to his friends in the vacation, stayed for the advantage of following his studies at Oxford, under the direction of his new teacher: and, in the autumn of the year 1749, he began a series of Letters to his Father, which fill above thirty pages in large quarto, very closely written; from the whole tenor of which, it is pleasant to see, how entire a confidence there was between a grave and learned father, and a son, not yet twenty years of age! Of these letters, though they are by no means correct enough, either for style or judgment, to stand the test of severe criticism, it is highly proper I should give some account; to show what those opinions were, which had now got possession of his mind; intermixing with my abstract such notes and explanations as shall seem requisite for a better understanding of it.

Having first apologized to his father, for not visiting him in the vacation, he gives him an account of his teacher. "I am obliged for the happiness I have enjoyed of late to a gentleman of this society, and shall always bless God that his providence ever brought me acquainted with him. He is a Fellow of our house; and, though but six-and-twenty, as complete a scholar in the whole circle of learning, as great a divine, as good a man, and as polite a gentleman, as the present age can boast of." These words of Mr. Horne I introduce with peculiar satisfaction; because they afford so strong a concurring testimony to the truth of what I have already ventured to say of Mr. Watson. This excellent man never published any large work, and will be known to posterity only by some occasional pieces which he printed in his lifetime.

His Sermon on the 19th Psalm, which he preached before the University, and afterwards left the printing of to my care, so delighted Mr. Horne (as it appears from these letters to his father) that it probably raised in his mind the first desire of undertaking that Commentary on the whole book of Psalms, which he afterwards brought to such perfection.¹ Mr. Watson published another Sermon on the Divine Appearance in Gen. xviii. ; which was furiously shot at by the bush-fighters of that time, in the Monthly Review ; insomuch that the author thought it might be of some service to take up his pen and write them a letter ; in which their insolence is reproved with such superior dignity of mind and serenity of temper, and their ignorance and error so learnedly exposed, that, if I were desirous of showing to any reader what Mr. Watson was, and what they were, I would by all means put that letter into his hand ; of which I suppose no copies are now to be found, but in the possession of some of his surviving friends. It is however made mention of with due honour by Mr. Delany, the celebrated Dean of Down in Ireland, who was once the intimate friend of Swift, and has given us the best account of his life and character in his Observations in answer to Lord Orrery. In a Preface to the third volume of his Revelation examined with Candour, which he printed at London very late in life, he speaks of a malignant style of criticism, in practice at that time with the obscure and unknown authors of a Monthly Review ; and observes upon the case, that "he must seem at

¹ This is the gentleman who is spoken of in a note on the Comment, on Psalm xix.

first sight a rash as well as a bold man, who would venture to wage war at once with Billingsgate and banditti. And yet in truth," adds he, "such a war, (defensive only) hath been waged with them to great advantage, by a gentleman, whose mind and manners are as remote from illiberal scurrility and abuse, as his adversaries appear to be from learning, from candour, and from every character of true criticism. Mr. Watson, the defendant here mentioned, hath, in return to their scurrility, answered and exposed them with strong, clear, and irresistible reasoning, and such a meek, calm and Christian spirit, as hath done honour to his own character, and uncommon justice to the Christian cause; such as were sufficient to silence any thing but effrontery, hardened in ignorance, to the end of the world." Mr. Watson also printed a Sermon, preached before the University on the 29th of May, which he calls an Admonition to the Church of England. In a long Preface to this Sermon, he has thrown out such valuable observations, that an excellent manual might be formed out of them, for preserving the members of the Church of England steady in their profession; by showing to them, so plainly as is here done, the principal dangers to which they are now exposed. Having said thus much of his teacher (and I could with pleasure have said much more) I must now show what he learned under him.

From the general account he gives of his studies, he appears, in consequence of his intercourse with Mr. Watson, to have been persuaded, that the system of divinity in the holy Scriptures is explained and attested by the scriptural account of created nature; and that this account, including

the Mosaic cosmogony, is true so far as it goes : and that the Bible, in virtue of its originality, is fitter to explain all the books in the world than they are to explain it : that much of the learning of the age was either unprofitable in itself, or dangerous in its effect ; and that literature, so far as it was a fashion, was in general unfavourable to Christianity, and to a right understanding of the Scripture : that the Jews had done much hurt in the Hebrew ; not to the text by corrupting it, but by leading us into their false way of interpreting and understanding it ; and that their rabbinical writers were therefore not to be taken as teachers by Christian students : that a notion lately conceived of the Mosaic law, as an institution merely civil or secular, without the doctrines of life and immortality in it, was of pernicious tendency ; contrary to the sense of all the primitive writers, and the avowed doctrine of the Church of England : that the sciences of metaphysics and ethics had a near alliance to deism ; and that, in consequence of the authority they had obtained, the doctrine of our pulpits was in general fallen below the Christian standard ; and that the Saviour and the redemption, without which our religion is nothing, were in a manner forgotten ; which had given too much occasion to the irregular teaching of the Tabernacle : that the sin of modern deism is the same in kind with the sin of paradise, which brought death into the world ; because it aspires to divine wisdom, that is, to the knowledge of divine things, and the distinction between good and evil, independently of God.

He had learned further, that the Hebrew language, and the Hebrew antiquities, lead to a su-

terior way of understanding the mythology and writings of the heathen classical authors : and that the Hebrew is a language of ideas, whose terms for invisible and spiritual things are taken with great advantage from the objects of nature ; and that there can be no other way of conceiving such things, because all our ideas enter by the senses : whereas in all other languages, there are arbitrary sounds without ideas.

It appeared to him further, that unbelief and blasphemy were gaining ground upon us, in virtue of some popular mistakes in natural philosophy, and threatened to banish all religion out of the world. Voltaire began very early to make his use of philosophy, and corrupt the world with it. He never was fit to mount it ; but he walked by the side of it, and used it as a stalking-horse. It is therefore of great consequence to the learned to know, that, as the heavens and the elements of the world had been set up by the heathens, as having power in themselves ; and that as the heathens, building on this false foundation, had lost the knowledge of God ; the modern doctrine, which gives innate powers to matter, as the followers of Democritus and Epicurus did, would probably end in atheism :¹ that the forces, which the modern philosophy uses, are not the forces of nature ; but that the world is carried on by the action of the elements on one another, and all under God : that it is no better than raving, to give active powers to matter, supposing it capable of acting where it is not ; and to affirm, at the same time, that all matter is inert, that is, inactive, and that even the

¹ This hath now actually come to pass.

Deity cannot act but where he is present, because his power cannot be but where his substance is.

He was also convinced, that infinite mischief had been done, not only by the tribe of deists and philosophers, but by some of our most celebrated divines, in extolling the dignity of human nature and the wisdom of human reason; both of which the Scripture delivers to us under a very different character; which the experience of the world is daily confirming. That infidels and profligates should wish to establish their own opinions upon the ruins of revelation was not to be wondered at; but that they, whose office it was to dress and defend the sacred vineyard, should fall in with them, and join with the wild boar out of the wood to root it up, was a matter of grief and surprise. A distemper must indeed be epidemical, when the physicians themselves are seized with it. This malady, when traced to its fountain-head, appears to have arisen from a general neglect in schools and seminaries of the study of the Scriptures in their original languages; where they attend so much to the works of heathens, and so little to the book of light, life and immortality. While the heads of boys are filled with tales of Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Bacchus, and Venus, the Bible is little heard of; and so the heathen creed becomes not only the first but the whole study. Jews, mistaken as they are, are still diligent in teaching the Scripture to their children in their own way; while we are teaching what even Jews are wise enough to abominate. Possessed by this opinion, that all polite knowledge is in heathen authors, and the Bible but a dull heavy book, which, instead of promoting, rather stands in the way of

improvement, a lad is sent from school to the university. Here is a very alarming crisis. If he happen to be of a sprightly wit, he falls into loose company, and, for want of religious principles, is led into all manner of wickedness. Should he study, he obtains logic under the form of a scholastic jargon, which in its simplicity¹ is of excellent use. Then he learns a system of ethics, which teaches morals without religious data, as the heathens did. After which, he probably goes on to Wollaston, Shaftsbury, and others; and is at length fixed in the opinion, that reason is sufficient for man without revelation. Our young philosopher, having proceeded thus far, wants nothing but metaphysics to complete him; by setting him to reason without principles, to judge without evidence, and to comprehend without ideas. He learns to deduce the being and attributes of God *a priori*; in consequence of which he discovers, that God is not a Trinity, but a single person. When a gentleman, thus equipped, takes the Bible into his hand and commences divine, what must become of it, and of him? Thus it appears, that, as things go now, a man may be a master of what is called human learning, and yet ignorant to the last degree of what only is worth knowing.

The foregoing abstract, which I have taken as faithfully as I could, is sufficient to show upon what great and important subjects Mr. Horne's mind was employed at this early period of his life. In the course of this correspondence, there

¹ The more simple the better: but the old logic, even with all its jargon, is a better guard to truth, than the new which has superseded it; and is found by many, who have considered the difference, so to be.

are several strokes of humour which ought not to be forgotten. The Hebrew Concordance of Marius de Calasio had lately been republished by the Rev. Mr. Romaine, and was an expensive work, so high as ten guineas at that time, though now at a price very much reduced. Mr. Horne had set his heart upon this work, thinking it necessary to his present studies; but knew not how to purchase it out of his allowance, or to ask his father in plain terms to make him a present of it; so he told him a story, and left the moral of it to speak for itself.

"In the last age, when Bishop Walton's Polyglott was first published, there was at Cambridge a Mr. Edwards, passionately fond of Oriental learning; who afterwards went by the name of Rabbi Edwards: he was a good man, and a good scholar: but being then rather young in the University, and not very rich, Walton's great work was far above his pocket. Nevertheless, not being able to sleep well without it, he sold his bed, and some of his furniture, and made the purchase: in consequence of which, he was obliged to sleep in a large chest, originally made to hold his clothes. But getting into his chest one night rather uncautiously, the lid of it, which had a bolt with a spring, fell down upon him and locked him in past recovery; and there he lay well nigh smothered to death. In the morning, Edwards, who was always an exact man, not appearing, it was wondered what was become of him: till at last his bed-maker, or the person who in better times had been his bed-maker, being alarmed, went to his chambers time enough to release him: and the accident, getting air, came to the ears of his friends,

who soon redeemed his bed for him." This story Mr. Horne told his father; and it had the desired effect. His father immediately sent him the money; for which he returns him abundant thanks, promising to repay him in the only possible way, viz. that of using the books to the best advantage. They were without question diligently turned over while he worked at his Commentary on the Psalms, and yielded him no small assistance.

The use of Hebrew, to divines was well understood by Bishop Bull, who did not content himself with a slight and superficial knowledge of it; and judged it so necessary in divinity, that it was usual with him to recommend the study of it to the candidates for orders, as a foundation for their future theological performances. Without this knowledge in Mr. Horne, we should never have seen his Commentary upon the Psalms.

When a student hath once persuaded himself that he sees truth in the principles of Mr. Hutchinson, a great revolution succeeds in his ideas of the natural world and its economy. Qualities in matter, with a vacuum for them to act in, are no longer venerable; and the authority of Newton's name, which goes with them, loses some of its influence. Nor is this in the present case so much to be wondered at: for Mr. Hutchinson had conceived an opinion, which possessed his mind very strongly, that Sir I. Newton and Dr. Clarke had formed a design, by introducing certain speculations founded on their new mode of philosophizing, to undermine and overthrow the theology of the Scripture, and to bring in the heathen Jupiter or stoical *anima mundi* into the place of the true God, whom we Christians believe and worship.

This will seem less extravagant when it is known, that Mr. Boyle¹ had also expressed his suspicions, many years before, that heathenism was about to rise again out of some new speculations, and reputedly grand discoveries, in natural philosophy. Yet I am not willing to believe, that the eminent persons above mentioned had actually formed any such design. What advantage unbelievers have, since their time, taken of their speculations in divinity and philosophy, and of the high repute which has attended them, and of the exclusive honours given to mathematical learning and mathematical reasoning, is another question ; and it calls for a serious examination at this time, when the moral world is in great disorder, from causes not well understood.

However these things may be, the prejudice so strongly infused by Mr. Hutchinson against an evil design in Clarke and Newton, took possession of Mr. Horne's mind at the age of nineteen ; and was further confirmed by reports which he had heard of a private good understanding betwixt them and the sceptics of the day, such as Collins, Toland, Tindal, &c. more than the world generally knew of. It is an undoubted fact, that there was an attempt to introduce atheism, or materialism, which is the same thing, here in England, toward the beginning of this century ; of which the Pantheis-ticon of Janus Junius Eoganesius, a technical name for John Toland, is a sufficient proof : and Hutchinson, who knew all the parties concerned, and the designs going forwarded, dropped such

¹ This remarkable passage from Mr. Boyle is quoted in *The Scholar Armed*, vol. ii. p. 282.

hints in his Treatise on Power¹ Essential and Mechanical, as gave a serious alarm to many persons well disposed. But our young scholar, viewing the whole matter at first on the ridiculous side, and considering it not only as a dangerous attempt upon religion, but a palpable offence against truth and reason, drew a parallel between the heathen doctrines in the Somnium Scipionis of Cicero, and the Newtonian philosophy; which he published, but without his name, in the year 1751; all the particulars of which parallel I shall not undertake to justify. I see its faulty flights and wanderings, from a want of more mature judgment and experience. It provoked several remarks, some in print, and some in manuscript; of which remarks the judgment was not greater, and the levity not less. The question was in reality too deep for those who attempted to fathom it at that time. Mr. Horne soon saw the impropriety of the style and manner, which as a young man he had assumed for merriment in that little piece: these were by no means agreeable to the constitution of his mind and temper. He therefore observed a very different manner afterwards; and, as soon as he had taken time to be-think himself, he resumed and reconsidered the subject; publishing his sentiments in 1753, (the year after that in which he had taken his degree of M. A.) in a mild and serious pamphlet, which he called A fair, candid, and impartial State of the Case between Sir I. Newton and Mr. Hutchinson: allowing to Sir Isaac the great merit of having settled laws and rules in natural philosophy; but at the same time claiming for Mr. Hutchinson the

¹ See p. 243, &c. of the old edition; beginning with the account of Woodward's conduct.

discovery of the true physiological causes, by which, under the power of the Creator, the natural world is moved and directed. The piece certainly is, what it calls itself, fair, candid, and impartial ; and the merits of the cause are very judiciously stated between the two parties : in consequence of which, a reader will distinguish, that Newton may be of sovereign skill in measuring forces as a mathematician ; and yet, that Hutchinson may be right in assigning causes, as a physiologist. It would carry me out too far, if I were to show by what arguments and evidence Mr. Horne has supported this distinction. For these I must refer to the pamphlet itself, which, having become very scarce, hath been lately reprinted with some other of his works : and I will venture to say thus much in its behalf, that, whatever becomes of the argument, the manner in which it is handled shows Mr. Horne, who, when he wrote it, was only in his twenty-third year, to have been a very extraordinary young man.

When a young man of a vigorous mind determines, in these latter days of the church, to make himself learned, he is in great danger, from the books he may read, and the company into which he may fall ; notwithstanding the integrity of his mind, and the purity of his intentions. If he join himself to a party, he will be under the influence of an affection, which is very properly called partiality ; and which inclines him to favour the measures of his party indiscriminately ; and therefore does great hurt to the judgment. He is apt to praise and censure, to love and hate, not with his own spirit, but with the spirit of his party. With their singularities, whatever they may be, he

will find little fault ; and, if they have errors, they are such as he will not soon discover. To this danger Mr. Horne was exposed, as a reader of Hutchinson. I shall therefore describe it more particularly, and show how and by what means he escaped it in all its parts, and preserved the independency of his understanding : in doing which, if I can do it faithfully, I shall certainly make myself of some use to the public.

Mr. Hutchinson fell into a new and uncommon train of thinking in philosophy, theology, and heathen antiquity ; and appears to have learned much of it from the Hebrew, which he studied in a way of his own : but as he laid too great a stress in many instances on the evidence of Hebrew etymology, his admirers would naturally do the same : and some of them carried the matter so far, that nothing else would go down with them ; till by degrees they adopted a mode of speaking, which had a nearer resemblance to cant and jargon, than to sound and sober learning. To this weakness those persons were most liable, who had received the fewest advantages from a learned education. This was the case with some sensible tradesmen and mechanics, who by studying Hebrew, with the assistance of English only, grew conceited of their learning, and carried too much sail with too little ballast. Of this Mr. Horne was very soon aware ; and he was in so little danger of following the example, that I used to hear him display the foibles of such persons with that mirth and good humour which he had ready at hand upon all occasions. With the like discretion and candour, he allowed to the Rev. Dr. Sharp of Durham all that could reasonably be allowed, when he attacked the

followers of Hutchinson upon the etymological quarter, where they seemed most vulnerable, or, where they might at least be annoyed with most appearance of advantage: and he never, through the whole course of his life, was a friend to the etymological part of the controversy; as it appears from his writings; in which Hebrew etymology, however he might apply to it for himself, is rarely if ever insisted upon. In some of his private letters, one of which has been already referred to in a note, he declared his mind very freely on the inexpediency of squabbling about words, when there were so many things to be brought forward, which were of greater importance, and would admit of less dispute.

A further danger arose from that custom, in which some of the followers of Mr. Hutchinson had too freely indulged themselves, of treating their opponents with too great asperity and contempt. Hutchinson himself was very reprehensible in this respect, as well in his conversation as in his writings, and thereby lost much of that influence with men of learning, which he might have preserved, had he considered it as a duty to be more temperate and flexible in his manner of addressing the public. But he was a man of a warm and hasty spirit, like Martin Luther; who to certain modern speculations in philosophy and theology could preserve no more respect than Luther did to the errors of Popery. How far the circumstances they both were under, the zeal by which they were actuated, and the provocations they met with from the world, will justify them in the use of intemperate language, can be known only to God, to whom they must give an account. But whatever excuses may

be made for the principals, we do not see how they can be extended to those who succeeded. Some of these however did claim for themselves the like privilege, and gave great offence to persons of cooler judgment. The world will not suffer things to be forced upon them. When men are angry, it is always supposed they have but little to say, and are provoked by a sense of the insufficiency of themselves and their cause. It was a wise saying of Lord Coke, the famous lawyer, "Whatever grief a man hath, ill words work no good, and learned counsel never use them." To this wise and excellent maxim the followers of Mr. Hutchinson did not in general attend as they ought to have done. It filled them with indignation, to see how little they prevailed against the perverse treatment of some ill-disposed adversaries: and, if they had found such principles as they thought of use to themselves, it was a mortification to see them overlooked and disdained by others. But there was so much sweetness in the natural temper of Mr. Horne, that no bitter weed could take root there; and the intemperance of others only served to put him the more upon his guard; of which we have a happy example in his State of the Case between Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Hutchinson. This was one of his earliest compositions; in which the argument is conducted throughout with perfect modesty, civility, and a proper respect to all parties. I have heard him admire greatly that calmness for which the Chinese are so remarkable, although it borders in some degree upon cunning or stupidity. "The only way for a man to gain the favour of the Chinese is to set forth his reasons in the coolest manner; that people being of such a disposition, as to des-

pise the most rational arguments, if delivered with anger." The same, said he, is true of mankind in general.

The learning, which disposes us to affect a superiority over other men is too generally attended by a forgetfulness of God : and it has therefore been well observed, that knowledge, though a good thing in itself, as light is when compared with darkness, is apt to puff us up : while charity, which is an humble and submissive virtue, edifieth ; that is, builds us up in the way of grace, and makes us better Christians. So far as knowledge, though of the purest sort, infuses pride, just so far it extinguishes devotion. It was therefore objected to the new Hebrew students, that they were a carnal sort of people, so full of scriptural learning, as to be much wanting in a due regard to scriptural piety. The intelligent reader will easily guess from what quarter such an accusation would arise. It came from those who are apt to offend in another way ; who suppose that an appearance of godly zeal, and a passion to save souls, will supply the defects of Christian knowledge : but without it, there will not be Christian prudence ; and such persons, neglecting to inform themselves, suffer under the want of judgment, and are carried into delusion, of which they do not see the consequences. Ignorant piety, like ignorant ingenuity, must go to school, before it will be able to work surely and with good effect. It must itself be taught before it can be fit to teach others. The great Lord Bacon observed of the first Puritans, that they reasoned powerfully on the necessity of a serious piety ; and brought men well to the question, What must I do to be saved ? But

when they had done this, they were at a loss how to give them an answer. There is danger to man on every side: learning is tempted to overlook piety; and piety thinks there is no use of learning. Happy is he who preserves himself from both these errors: who, while he seeks wisdom, applies it first to the reformation of his own life, and then to the lives of other men! This appears to have been the persuasion of Mr. Horne; in whose earliest writings we find such a tincture of devotion, that some of his readers, who valued themselves upon their discernment, thought his warmth discovered a degree of enthusiasm; that he was devout overmuch; and consequently we have the testimony of such persons, that he was not wanting in Christian piety. Thus much at least may be affirmed, that he was in no danger of an outward formal religion, destitute of the vital spirit of Christianity.

There was yet another danger to be apprehended, and that of no small concern to a member of the Church of England. It happened, that among the admirers of Mr. Hutchinson there were many dissenters; who, with all the information they had acquired, did not appear (as might reasonably have been expected) to be much softened in their prejudices against the constitution of this church.—With some of these Mr. Horne frequently fell into company; of which it was not an improbable consequence (and he afterwards was aware of it) that he might come by degrees to be less affected, than he ought to be, to the church of which he was a member: especially as there was some jealousy already in the minds of Mr. Hutchinson's readers against their superiors both in church and state, on

account of the unfair and angry treatment (I may say, persecution) some of them had suffered, and the dislike and aversion which their principles had met with from persons of established reputation. The modest and civil Letter to a Bishop, from the Lord President of the Court of Session in Scotland, the Honourable Duncan Forbes, had met with little or no attention; which, with many other slights and provocations, contributed to keep them in no very good humour: so that it was to be feared they would be too ready to hear, what others might be too ready to suggest. With some of our dissenters, it is too much the custom to turn the clergy of the church and their profession into ridicule; a sort of behaviour which should always be avoided by religious men, when religion is the subject. A piece was handed about, which calls itself a Dialogue upon Bishops; a sly and malignant invective, in a strain of irony, and by no means destitute of wit, against the prelates of this church. The thing is written in the same spirit with the Martin Mar-Prelate of the old Puritans, though in a superior strain of irony; and had for its author a man whose name was Biron, a dissenting teacher of eminence; whose works are collected together, and published, under the terrific title of The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken. The Church of England, whose religion is here intended by the word priestcraft, never had a more willing adversary than this man; unless it were Gordon, the author of the Independent Whig; whose writings, plentifully dispersed there, contributed not a little to the revolt of America, by rendering the Americans more disaffected to the religion of the mother country.

So long as a connexion remained with the non-conforming readers of Mr. Hutchinson, it was expected by them, that all church differences would be laid aside, as matters of no signification ; and that both parties would join hands against the common enemies of Christianity. Things being thus disposed, an occurrence intervened, to which Mr. Horne, as it appears from some of his letters, imputed the breach which afterwards took place, and his own deliverance, in consequence of it, from all danger of fanatical infection.

Dr. Clayton, then Bishop of Clogher in Ireland, in the year 1750, published his *Essay on Spirit*, with design to recommend the Arian doctrine, and to prepare the way for suitable alterations in the Liturgy. The favourers of heresy are seldom found to be the enemies of schism : this author, therefore, to strengthen his party, distinguished himself as a warm friend to the cause of the sectaries ; intimidating the Church with the prospect of destruction, unless the safety of it were provided for by a timely compliance with the demands of its adversaries. This *Essay*, being reported to come from a person of such eminence in the Church alarmed her friends and animated her enemies. It carried with it a shew of learning, and some subtlety of argument : an answer to it was therefore expected and wished for.

It happened at this time, that I was settled at Finedon in Northamptonshire, as curate to the Rev. Sir John Dolben ; which I have reason to remember as a most happy circumstance in the early part of my life. In this situation I was frequently visited by my friend and fellow-student Mr. Horne. He came to me, possessed with a desire of seeing

an answer to this Essay on Spirit; and persuaded me to undertake it. All circumstances being favourable, no objection was made; and accordingly down we sat together for a whole month to the business. The house of my patron, Sir John Dolben, had an excellent library; a considerable part of which had descended from Archbishop Dolben; and it was furnished with books in every branch of reading, as well ancient as modern, but particularly in divinity and ecclesiastical history. In a country parish, without such an advantage, our attempt had been wild and hopeless: but with it, we had no fear of being at a loss concerning any point of learning that might arise. What Bishop Clayton (supposing him to be the author of an Essay on Spirit) had offered in favour of the non-conformists, obliged us to look into the controversy between them and the Church, which as yet we had never considered; and to consult such historians as had given a faithful account of it. This inquiry brought many things to our view, of which we had never heard; and contributed very much to confirm us in the profession to which we had been educated: but, at the same time, it raised in our minds some new suspicions against our non-conforming friends; and the occasion called upon us to say some things which it could not be very agreeable to them to hear, so long as they persisted in their separation. In every controversy, there will be some rough places, over which the tender-footed will not be able to pass without being hurt; and when this happens, they will probably lay upon others that fault which is to be found only in themselves. It happened as might be expected. When the Answer was published, great

offence was taken ; and they who had argued for us, as Christians, in a common cause, began now to show themselves as enemies to the Church of England. They addressed themselves to us in such a strain, to the one by letter, to the other in conversation, as had no tendency to soften or conciliate ; for it breathed nothing but contempt and defiance. It had therefore the good effect of obliging us to go on still further in our inquiries, that we might be able to stand our ground. To this occurrence it was at first owing, that Mr. Horne became so well learned in the controversy between the Church and the sectaries, and was confirmed for life in his attachment to the Church of England.¹ It was another happy circumstance, that

¹ The following extract from a long letter will show how his mind was employed at the time when it was written :—“ I have been reading some of the works of Dr. George Hickes against the Romanists. He is a sound and acute reasoner, and differs from Leslie in this, that whereas Leslie’s method was, to single out one point which he calls the *jugulum cause*, and stick to that ; Hickes follows them through all their objections ; unravels their sophistry, and confirms all he says with exact and elaborate proofs. He shows the greatest knowledge of primitive antiquity, of fathers, councils, and the constitution and discipline of the Church in the first and purest ages of it. This kind of learning is of much greater value and consequence than many now apprehend. What next after the Bible, can demand a Christian’s attention before the history of the Church, purchased by the blood of Christ, founded by inspired apostles, and actuated by a spirit of love and unity, which made a heaven upon earth even in the midst of persecution, and enabled them to lay down their lives for the truth’s sake ? Much I am sure is done by that cementing bond of the spirit, which unites Christians to their head and to one another, and makes them consider themselves as members of the same body, that is as a church, as a fold of sheep, not as straggling individuals.—What I see of this in a certain class of writers determines me to look into that affair.” Such a man as this, so far advanced in the days of his youth, would pay but little regard to shallow reasonings and hasty language from the enemies of uniformity.

in the issue, by persons of more impartiality, the Answer to the Essay on Spirit, on which we had bestowed so much labour, was very favourably received, especially in Ireland, where it was most wanted. The work was rendered more useful by the opportunity it gave us of explaining some abstruse articles in the learning of antiquity; particularly, the Hermetic, Pythagorean, and Platonic trinities; which the writer of the Essay had pressed into his service, to distract the minds of his readers, without pretending to know the sense of them. We had the advantage of the author in this subject, from having been permitted to look into some manuscript papers of a learned gentleman, who had spent several years of his life in studying the mysteries of the ancient Greek Philosophy; which, at the bottom, always proved to be materialism. In this the speculations of heathen philosophers naturally ended; and so do the speculations of those moderns who follow them in their ways of reasoning.

From our frequent intercourse with the library above mentioned, we had the good fortune to meet with the works of the Rev. Charles Leslie in two vols. fol. which may be considered as a library in themselves to any young student of the Church of England; and no such person, who takes a fancy to what he there finds, can ever fall into Socinianism, fanaticism, popery, or any other of those more modern corruptions which infest this Church and nation. Every treatise comprehended in that collection is incomparable in its way: and I shall never forget how Mr. Horne expressed his astonishment, when he had perused what Mr. Leslie calls the History of Sin and Heresy; which, from

the hints that are found in the Scriptures, gives an account how they, sin and heresy, were generated among the angels before the beginning of the world : "It is," said he, "as if the man had looked into heaven, to see what passed there, on occasion of Lucifer's rebellion."

In reading Mr. Leslie's Socinian controversy, he was highly amused with a curiosity, which the author by good fortune, though with great difficulty, had procured and presented to the public in an English translation from the Arabic. It is a letter addressed to the Morocco ambassador, by two of the Socinian fraternity in England, who called themselves two single philosophers, and proposed a religious comprehension with the Turks: the said Socinians having discovered, that the Turks and themselves were so nearly of one opinion, that very little was wanting on either side to unite them in the same communion. The present very learned Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Horsley, lighted upon the same thing many years afterwards, and was so much struck with its singularity, that he has referred to it in his works, to show how naturally the religion of the Socinians ends in the enthusiasm of Mahomet.

The sight of Mr. Leslie's two theological folios prepared Mr. Horne for the reading such of his political works as should afterwards fall in his way: and it was not long before he met with a periodical paper, under the title of *The Rehearsals*, which the author had published in the time of Queen Anne, when the infidels and dissenters were most busy; and had conceived strong hopes (as they said themselves) of destroying the Established Church. This paper boldly encountered all their

arguments ; dissected Sidney and Locke ; confuted the republican principles, and exposed all the designs of the party. That party, however, had, at that time, interest enough to get the paper, which bore so hard upon them, suppressed by authority : but not till the writer had done the best of his work ; which made him boast, notwithstanding what had happened, that he had sown those seeds of orthodoxy and loyalty in this kingdom, which all the devils in hell would never be able to root out of it. This singular work, then lately reprinted in six volumes (1750) fell into the hands of Mr. Horne at Oxford, and was examined with equal curiosity and attention. According to his own account, he had profited greatly by the reading of it ; and the work, which gave to one man of genius and discernment so much satisfaction, must have had its effect on many others ; insomuch that it is highly probable, the loyalty found amongst us at this day, and by which the nation has of late been so happily preserved, may have grown up from some of the seeds then sown by Mr. Leslie : and I have some authority for what I say.¹ This I know, that the reading of that work begat in the mind of Mr. Horne an early and strict attention to those political differences, and the grounds of them, which have at sundry times agitated this country, and disturbed public affairs.

In the year when the Jew Bill was depending, and after it had passed the House, he frequently employed himself in sending to an evening paper

¹ No further proof of this will be wanting to those intelligent persons, who have read the learned Mr. Whitaker's Real Origin of Government, one of the greatest and best pieces the times have produced.

of the time certain communications, which were much noticed; while the author was totally unknown, except to some of his nearest acquaintances. By the favour of a great lady, it was my fortune (though then very young) to be at a table where some persons of the first quality were assembled, and I heard one of them¹ very earnestly on the matter and style of some of these papers, of which he knew the secret history; and was not a little diverted when I heard what passed about them. The author of those papers the Jew Bill gave me offence, and the Marriage Bill not much less. I was highly gratified by the part taken in that perilous business by the Rev. William Romeyn who opposed the Considerations dispersed all over the kingdom in defence of the Jew Bill, with a degree of spirit and success, which reminded me of Swift's opposition to Wood's halfpence in Drapier's Letters.

Mr. Horne having entered upon his first theological studies, not without an ardent piety, he was ready to lay hold of every thing that might advance in the knowledge and practice of the Christian life. He accordingly made himself well acquainted with the serious, practical writings of the Rev. William Law, which, I believe, were first recommended to him by Mr. Hamilton, afterwards A deacon of Raphoe in Ireland, or by the Rev. J. Tor Patten of Corpus Christi College. He formed himself in many respects to the strictness of Mr. Law's rules of devotion; but without danger of falling, as so many did, after Mr. Law's example, into the stupendous reveries of Jakob Behmen, the German Theosophist. From thi

¹ Lord Temple.

was effectually secured by his attachment to the doctrines and forms of the primitive Church, in which he was well grounded by the writings of Leslie, and also of the primitive fathers, some of which were become familiar to him, and very highly esteemed. But being sensible how easy it was for many of those who took their piety from Mr. Law, to take his errors along with it, he drew up a very useful paper, for the security of such persons as might not have judgment enough to distinguish properly, under the title of Cautions to the Readers of Mr. Law : and excellent they are for the purpose intended : they show the goodness of his heart, and the soundness of his judgment.

Some worthy ladies, who were in the habit of reading Mr. Law, had from thence filled their heads with several of the wild notions of Jacob Behmen ; and were zealous in making proselytes. A lady of fashion in Ireland, of the first rate for beauty, elegance, and accomplishment, was going apace into this way, at the instance of a proselyting acquaintance. Her situation was known and lamented ; and it was earnestly wished that somebody would undertake to open her eyes before she was too far gone. Mr. Horne, though much interested in the success of such an attempt, did not take the office upon himself, but committed it to a friend ; and the paper produced the desired effect.

When the writings of Leslie, or Law, or Hutchinson were before Mr. Horne, he used them with judgment and moderation, to qualify and temper each other : he took what was excellent from all, without admitting what was exceptionable from any. To his academical Greek and Latin he had

added a familiar acquaintance with the Hebrew; and having found his way to the Christian fathers, I consider him now as a person furnished with every light, and secured from every danger, which could possibly occur to him as a member of the Church of England; and consequently well prepared for any service which the times might require of him. In English divinity he had also greatly improved himself by the writings of Dr. Jackson, and Dr. Jeremy Taylor: from the latter of which, I suppose him to have derived much of that mildness and devotion, for which he was afterwards so conspicuous.¹ The former, Dr. Jackson, is a magazine of theological learning, everywhere penned with great elegance and dignity, so that his style is a pattern of perfection. His writings, once thought inestimable by every body but the Calvinists, had been greatly neglected, and would probably have continued so, but for the praises bestowed upon them by the celebrated Mr. Merrick, of Trinity College in Oxford, who brought them once more into repute with many learned readers. The early extracts of Mr. Horne, which are now remaining, show how much information he derived from this excellent writer; who deserves to be numbered with the English fathers of the Church. That there cannot be in the Church of England a useful scholar, unless he is precise in

¹ From many passages which might be produced from his private letters and his printed works, no English writer seems to have taken his fancy, and fallen in so exactly with his own disposition, as Dr. Taylor; first in his Life of Christ, then in his Ductor Dubitantium or Rule of Conscience, and afterwards in his Rule and Exercise of Holy Dying, which he calls a Golden Tract, and the author of it, the inimitable Bishop Jeremy Taylor. See his Commentary on Psalm cxix. v. 71.

following the same track of learning, I will not presume to say : but this I shall always think, that if we are ever to see another Mr. Horne ; a commentator, so learned ; a preacher, so evangelical ; a writer, so accomplished ; a Christian, so exemplary ; he must come out of the same school.

With his mind thus furnished, the time drew near when he was to take holy orders. This was a serious affair to him : and he entered upon it, as every candidate ought to do, with a resolution to apply the studies he had followed to the practice of his ministry ; and, above all the rest, his study of the Holy Scripture. Soon after he had been ordained, on Trinity Sunday, 1753, by the Bishop of Oxford, he related the circumstance by letter to an intimate friend, not without adding the following petition, which is well worth preserving : “ May he, who ordered Peter three times to feed his lambs, give me grace, knowledge, and skill, to watch and attend to the flock, which he purchased upon the cross, and to give rest to those who are under the burden of sin or sorrow ! It has pleased God to call me to the ministry in very troublesome times indeed ; when a lion and a bear have broken into the fold, and are making havoc among the sheep. With a firm, though humble confidence, do I purpose to go forth ; not in my own strength, but in the strength of the Lord God ; and may he prosper the work of my hands ! ” He came to me, then resident upon the curacy of Finedon in Northamptonshire, to preach his first sermon : to which, as it might be expected, I listened with no small attention ; under an assurance, that his doctrine would be good, and that he was capable of adorning it to a high degree with beautiful language and

a graceful delivery. The discourse he then preached, though excellent in its kind, is not printed among his other works. Scrupulous critics, he thought, might be of opinion, that he had given too great scope to his imagination; and that the text, in the sense he took it, was not a foundation solid enough to build so much upon. This was his sentiment when his judgment was more mature; and he seems to me to have judged rightly. Yet the discourse was admirable in respect of its composition and its moral tendency. Give me an audience of well-disposed Christians, among whom there are no dry moralists, no fastidious critics; and I would stake my life upon the hazard of pleasing them all by the preaching of that sermon. With further preparation, and a little more experience, he preached in a more public pulpit, before one of the largest and most polite congregations at London. The preacher, whose place he supplied, but who attended in the church on purpose to hear him, was so much affected by what he had heard, and the manner in which it was delivered, that when he visited me shortly after in the country, he was so full of this sermon, that he gave me the matter and the method of it by heart; pronouncing at the end of it, what a writer of his life ought never to forget, that "George Horne was, without exception, the best preacher in England." Which testimony was the more valuable, because it came from a person, who had, with many people, the reputation of being such himself. This sermon is preserved; and if the reader should be a judge, and will take the pains to examine it, he will think it merits what is here said of it. The subject is the second advent of Christ to judgment. The text is from

Rev. i. 7. ‘Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen.’

Besides his talent for preaching, which from the beginning promised (and has now produced) great things; Mr. Horne had obtained so high a character at Oxford, for his humanity, condescension, and piety, that his reputation came to the ears of a criminal in the castle, under sentence of death for one of the many highway robberies he had committed. The name of this man was Dumas; he was an Irishman by birth; and his appearance and address had so much of the gentleman, that he was a person of the first rank in his profession. This man having heard of Mr. Horne, as a person remarkable for his sense and goodness, requested the favour of his attendance; to which, on a principle of conscience, he consented; though the office was such as would probably put the tenderness of his mind to a very severe trial. And so it proved in the event; his health being considerably affected for some time afterwards. I do not find among his papers any minutes of this affair preserved in writing;¹ and though he gave me a large account of it, to which I could not but listen with great attention, I cannot recollect so much of it as I wish to do, at this distance of time. This I know, that he used to think anxiously with himself day and night, in what manner he should address this unhappy man, and what kind of spiritual counsel would be most likely to succeed with him;

¹ But the prayers he composed for the occasion are in one of his MSS.

for he found him, though ready and sensible enough in all common things, deplorably destitute of all religious knowledge. To the best of my remembrance he always chose to be quite alone with him when he attended ; and by repeated applications, and constant prayer, recommended by his mild and engaging manner, thought he had made some considerable impression upon his mind. In the last conference before his execution, he thanked Mr. Horne very heartily for his goodness to him, and used these very remarkable words : “ Sir, you may, perhaps, wonder at what I am about to tell you ; but, I do assure you, I feel at this moment no more sense of fear, than I should do if I were going a common journey.” To this Mr. Horne answered, that he was indeed very much surprised ; but he hoped it was upon a right principle. And so let us hope : though the criminal was scarcely explicit enough to give due satisfaction, whether this indifference proceeded from Christian hope or constitutional hardness. The conversation between the ordinary and the prisoner the evening before he suffered (as Mr. Horne related it, who was present at the interview) consisted chiefly in an exact description of all the particulars of the ceremonial, which the prisoner was to go through in the way to his death ; and of course had very little either of comfort or instruction in it. The feelings of that gentleman, who had attended the executions for several years, were very different from those of his assistant ; and he spoke of the approaching execution with as little emotion, as if Mr. Dumas had taken a place for the next morning in an Oxford coach. He even amused himself with telling them the story of another unhappy criminal, who ha-

nothing of the fortitude of Mr. Dumas; a person of the law, put to death for forgery, whose heart had failed him at the time of his execution. "There was poor Paul," said he, "we could not make him rise in the morning—he would not get up. I thought we should never have got him hanged that day," &c. Such is the effect of custom and habit upon some minds!

Thus was Mr. Horne initiated early into the most difficult duty of the pastoral charge, the visitation of the sick and dying: a work of extreme charity; but for which all men are not equally fit; some, because they have too little tenderness; others, because they have too much. It is a blessing that there are many helps and directions for those who wish to improve themselves. The office in the Liturgy is excellent in its kind, but it doth not come up to all cases. Among the posthumous papers of Bishop Horne, I find an inestimable manuscript, which it is probable he might begin to compile for his own use about this time, and partly for the occasion of which I have been speaking. He was by no means unacquainted with the matter and the language of prayer; having shown to me, as we were upon a walk one summer's evening in the country, when he was a very young man, that precious composition of Bishop Andrews, the first copy of which occurred to him in the library of Magdalen College; on which he set so great a value during the rest of his life, that, while he was Dean of Canterbury, he published, after the example of the excellent Dean Stanhope, his predecessor, a handsome English edition of it. The original is in Greek and Latin; and it happened some time after Mr. Horne had first brought the work into

request, that a great number of copies of the Greek and Latin edition were discovered in a warehouse at Oxford, where they had lain undisturbed in sheets for many years. In the copy published after Dean Stanhope's form, the Manual for the Sick, though the best thing extant upon its subject, is wholly omitted : but in the posthumous manuscript I speak of, the whole is put together, with improvements by the compiler ; and I wish all the parochial clergy in the nation were possessed of it.

We are now coming to a more busy period of Mr. Horne's life, the year 1756, when he was called upon to be an apologist for himself and some of his friends, against the attack of a literary adversary.

In the controversy about Hebrew names, and their doubtful interpretations, in which the learned Dr. Sharp of Durham was prevailed upon (as it is reported, much against his will) to engage, Mr. Horne never interfered ; as being of opinion, that if all that part of Mr. Hutchinson's system were left to its fate, the most useful and valuable parts of it would still remain, with their evidences from the Scripture, the natural world, and the testimony of sacred and profane antiquity. He was likewise of opinion, that where words are the subject, words may be multiplied without end : and the witnesses of the dispute, at least the majority of them, having no competent knowledge of so uncommon a subject, would be sure to go as fashion and the current of the times should direct. That a zealous reader of the Hebrew, captivated by the curiosity of its etymologies, should pursue them beyond the bounds of prudence, is not to be wondered at. Many Hebrew etymologies are so well founded,

and throw so much light on the learning of antiquity, and the origin of languages, that no man can be a complete philologist without a proper knowledge of them. The learned well know how useful Mr. Bryant has endeavoured to make himself of late years by following them : and yet, it must be confessed that, with all his learning, he has many fancies and peculiarities of his own, which he would find it difficult to maintain. If Mr. Hutchinson and his followers have been sometimes visionary in their criticisms, and carried things too far, it does not appear that the worst of their interpretations are so bad as those of some learned critics in the last century, who, from the allowed primævity of their favourite language, applied it without discretion to every thing. All the names in Homer's Iliad and Odyssey were Hebraized, and all his fables were derived from some history or other in the Bible : and this to such a degree, as was utterly improbable, and even childish and ridiculous.¹ Such are the weaknesses to which great scholars are subject, in common with other men ; sometimes for want of light, and sometimes for want of discretion : and the greatest scholars of this age are not without them. Dr. Horne, I have reason to think, did so much justice to the criticisms of Dr. Sharp, as to read them carefully : which is more than I dare say of myself ; and I may plead in my behalf the example of my learned and respectable friend Granville Sharp, Esq., the son of the archdeacon ; who very ingenuously owned to

¹ If the curious reader can meet with a book under the title of Οὐηπος Ἐβραιζων, he will see this plan, of deriving all things from the Hebrew, carried to extremity. He may also find other examples, but not so extravagant, in Gale's Court of the Gentiles.

me, that he had never his father's books in the Hutchinsonian controversy : perhaps, because he is as little inclined to logomachy as I am. However, I have seen enough to discover from the general tenor of them, that it seems to have been the design of that learned author, to raise difficulties, and throw things into the shade ; in which he has apparently succeeded. When I look into a writer of the Hutchinsonian persuasion, though I may suspect his criticisms, and dislike his manner, I am animated by his zeal, and generally learn something useful : but when I look into the criticisms of Dr. Sharp, I learn nothing : I feel cold and dissatisfied with all languages and all science ; as if the Scripture itself were out of tune, and divinity a mere dispute. It is therefore my persuasion, that his writings have done little service to theology or philology, but that they have operated rather as a discouragement ; for who will labour, if there be no prospect of coming to any determination one way or the other ? That I am not taking a part against Dr. Sharp, but that Dr. Sharp did in this respect take a part against himself, is evident from his own words ; which do plainly declare, that his object in writing against the followers of Hutchinson was, to " prove the uncertainty of something affirmed to be certain." I know of some, who took the contrary part ; endeavouring to prove " the certainty of something affirmed to be uncertain ;" and I think they were more hopefully employed : for where uncertainty is the prize, what encouragement is there to strive for it ? Mr. Horne, who knew the value of his time, had no inclination to waste any of it in this endless chace of verbal criticism : and I have reason to think, that, if there

was any study in particular to which he took a complete aversion, it was the Hutchinsonian controversy about a few¹ Hebrew words.

Another dispute soon arose, after that of Dr. Sharp, which was of much greater concern; and so Mr. Horne thought, from the part he took in it. How he acquitted himself, the reader must judge when he has heard the particulars.

With many young scholars in the University of Oxford, the principles of Mr. Hutchinson began to be in such esteem, that some member of the university, who was in the opposite interest, or had no fancy to that way, made a very severe attack upon them in an anonymous pamphlet, intitled, *A Word to the Hutchinsonians*; and Mr. Horne, being personally struck at, as the principal object of the author's animadversions, was obliged to take up the pen in defence of himself and his friends. The public in general, and Mr. Horne in particular, by some very broad hints, gave the thing to Mr. Kennicott of Exeter College, a man of parts, and a clear,

¹ I have here allowed more than I can strictly justify; and, by so doing, I have given advantage to some, and offence to others: I beg therefore to be rightly understood. In respect to Dr. Sharp, Mr. Horne was certainly of opinion, that the Doctor had left the more useful and valuable parts of Mr. Hutchinson's system untouched: so I myself have thought, and been assured from that day to this; and I believe the reader will himself be of the same opinion, if he duly considers the contents of my Preface. Whatever dislike Mr. Horne might express toward the verbal disputes of that time, no man could set a greater value than he did on Hebrew learning discretely followed and applied. That I may not be thought to leave so weighty a matter under an unjust statement, I have subjoined to this second edition a letter which I wrote to a person of honour, recommending the study of the Hebrew language by showing its usefulness and excellence. I embrace the present occasion of making it public, and wish it may derive some vitality from the reputation of Bishop Horne.

agreeable writer, who had very justly acquired some fame for his skill in the Hebrew language. His two Dissertations, one on the Tree of Life, and the other on the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel, were in many hands, and so well approved, that some further and better fruit of his studies might reasonably be expected. As to the author of this anonymous pamphlet, I can affirm nothing positively from my own knowledge; I can only relate, what was told me by Dr. Golding of New College, who was afterwards Warden of Winchester. From this gentleman I heard what had happened to himself in regard to the publication above mentioned, and what his own sentiments were. Soon after it appeared, Mr. Kennicott accosted him in a bookseller's shop. "Dr. Golding, I give you joy, on being the author of a very ingenious pamphlet, called *A Word to the Hutchinsonians*."—"Indeed," said Dr. Golding, "I was not the author of it; but I believe you know who was." When an answer had appeared, with the name of Mr. Horne to it, Dr. Golding, meeting Mr. Kennicott in the street, said, "Well, Mr. Kennicott, and who is the author of the *Word to the Hutchinsonians* now?" Which question was only answered by a laugh. The Dr. Golding, of whom I am speaking, had been a preacher much approved in the pulpit of the University, and had contended with some zeal for the principles of Hutchinson; but had now the reputation of having forsaken them all; which report might possibly give occasion to Mr. Kennicott's compliment; it being not improbable, that a person who could forsake them would make it his next step (as Dr. Dodd afterwards did) to write against them. He had been an intimate friend to the

above-mentioned Mr. Watson of University College, who had recommended him to travel as a tutor with the Earl of Dartmouth and Mr. North, afterwards Lord North and Lord Guilford, with whom he spent some time abroad. He was undoubtedly a man of learning and ability: but being under the repute of having renounced some principles he had once received, I was very desirous to know how that matter might be: and Dr. Golding, at my request, was so obliging as to do me the honour of a visit, while I lived at a private house in Oxford. I told him plainly, that there were some opinions of Hutchinson in natural philosophy, which, when properly distinguished, did appear to me to be true, and, as such, worth recommending to the world: and that, as I had some intention of taking the office upon myself, I should esteem it as a great favour, if he, being a person of more years and experience, would communicate to me fairly those objections, which had taken effect upon his own mind; that if I should be staggered with them, my design might be laid aside. The doctor was full of pleasantry and good humour; gave me the whole story about the pamphlet, as above related, and spoke with great respect of Mr. Horne: but as to the particular object of my enquiry, his philosophical reasons, I could not succeed in drawing any one of them out of him, and am to this hour in the dark upon the subject. I shall not therefore indulge myself in speculations and conjectures, for which I have no authority; but only remark in general, what all men of discernment know to be true; that, as a man's opinions have an influence upon his expectations in this world, so his expectations in this world may

have an influence upon his opinions. Hoping that I shall be pardoned for a small digression, not quite foreign to the subject in hand, I return now to Mr. Horne and his apology,¹ of which I shall give a short view; but it is a work which cannot without injury be abridged; as comprehending a great variety of subjects in a small compass.

The temper of it appears in the first page. The excellent Hooker had replied to a petulant adversary in the following very significant words: "Your next argument consists of railing and reasons. To your railing I say nothing: to your reasons I say what follows." "This sentence," says the apologist, "I am obliged to adopt, as the rule of my own conduct; the author I am now concerned with having mixed with his arguments a great deal of bitterness and abuse, which must do as little credit to himself as service to his cause. He is in full expectation of being heartily abused in return: but I have no occasion for that sort of artillery; and have learned besides, that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Therefore, in the words of the excellent Hooker, to his railing I say nothing: to his reasons I say what follows."

To the charge of being an Hutchinsonian, a name so invidiously applied, as a sectarian appellation, to himself and other readers of Hutchinson's writings, he answers, that, as Christians, they acknowledge no master but one, that is Christ: that they were members only of the church: and that, as all their reading had not formed them into a

¹ The title is, "An Apology for certain Gentlemen in the University of Oxford, aspersed in a late anonymous Pamphlet." &c.

sect, they ought not to have a mark set upon them. ‘ Is it not hard measure,’ says he, ‘ that when a clergyman only preaches the doctrines and enforces the duties of Christianity from the Scriptures, his character shall be blasted, and himself rendered odious by the force of a name, which, in such cases, always signifies what the imposers please to mean, and the people to hate? There are many names of this kind now in vogue. If a man preaches Christ, that he is the end of the law, and the fulness of the gospel—‘ You need not mind him; he is a Hutchinsonian.’ If he mentions the assistance and direction of the Holy Spirit, with the necessity of prayer, mortification, and the taking up of the cross—‘ O, he is a Methodist!’ If he talks of the divine right of episcopacy, with a word concerning the danger of schism—‘ Just going over to Popery!’ And if he preaches obedience to King George—‘ You may depend upon it, he is a Pretender’s man.’ Many things may be ridiculed under their false titles, which it would not be so decent to laugh at under their true ones.’

As to their being a sect or combination of separatists from the Church-of-England Christians, ‘ We do,’ says he, ‘ most sincerely disavow the name and the thing. In the communion of the Church of England we intend to die. To every zealous friend and promoter of the interest of Christianity, the Scriptures, and the church, we are ready cheerfully to give the right-hand of fellowship, whether he be a reader of Mr. Hutchinson or not.’ &c. ‘ They tell men,’ said their accuser, ‘ that they, and they only, are the servants of the most high God, who show forth the way of salvation:’ —“ they labour to discredit all other preachers.”

"By no means :" says the answerer, "they labour to discredit all false doctrines, preached by many who should preach the gospel. It is the complaint of hundreds of serious and pious Christians, who never read or heard of Mr. Hutchinson, that there is at present a lamentable falling off from the old way of preaching and expounding the word of God. And, if there be such a defection from the primitive manner of preaching, the proper place wherein to speak of it is an university, where preachers are educated. If offence should be taken at this, I can only say, that, if any one will tell me how truth may be spoken, in such cases as these, without offending some, I will spare no labour to learn the art of it."

If any person wishes to know all the particular charges brought forward by this author, and how they are answered, he will find the pamphlet at large a very curious piece, and to that I would refer him : but some of these answers carry so much instruction, that I cannot refrain from extracting a few of them. To the charge of their insulting and trampling upon reason, under pretence of glorifying revelation, Mr. Horne answers : "The abuse, not the use, of reason, is what we argue against. Reason, we say, was made to learn, not to teach. What the eye is to the body, reason or understanding is to the soul ; as saith the apostle, Eph. i. 18, 'having the eyes of your understanding enlightened.' The eye is framed in such a manner as to be capable of seeing ; reason in such a manner as to be capable of knowing. But the eye, though ever so good, cannot see without light : reason, though ever so perfect, cannot know without instruction. Therefore the phrase, light of reason, is improper;

because it is as absurd to make reason its own informer, as to make the eye the source of its own light: whereas, reason can be no more than the organ which receives instruction, as the eye admits the light of heaven. A man may as well take a view of things upon earth in a dark night by the light of his own eye, as discover the things of heaven, during the night of nature, by the light of his own reason," &c.

To another similar objection, often made against them, that they decry natural religion, it is answered, "To be sure, we do; because, at the best, it is a religion without the knowledge of the true God, or the hope of salvation; which is Deism: and it is a matter of fact, that, from Adam to this day, there never was, or could be, a man left to himself, to make a religion of nature. It is, we know, a received notion, that man, by a due and proper use of his reasoning faculties, may do great things: and so, by a due and proper use of the organs of vision, he may know much of the objects around him. But still, the pinching question returns: is it not light that enables him to make a due and proper use of the one, and instruction of the other? Show us the eye that sees without light, and the understanding that reasons upon religion without instruction, and we will allow they both do it by the light of nature. Till then, let us hear no more of natural religion. And let me, on the subjects of reason and nature, recommend two books: the first, Mr. Leslie's Short and Easy Method with the Deists; where the debate between them and the Christians upon the evidence of revelation is brought to a single point, and their cause overthrown for ever. This most excellent

piece, with the other tracts of the same author usually bound with it, have, I thank God, entirely removed every doubt from my mind : and, in my poor opinion, they render the metaphysical performances upon the subject entirely useless. The second book I would recommend is Dr. Ellis's Knowledge of Divine Things from Revelation, not from Reason or Nature. In this book natural religion is fairly demolished."

Mr. Horne and his friends were further charged with " a great contempt for learning." " But that," says he, " depends upon the nature and kind of the learning. Because sometimes a man is called a learned man, who, after a course of several years' hard study, can tell you, within a trifle, how many degrees of the nonentity of nothing must be annihilated, before it comes to be something. See King's Origin of Evil, ch. iii. p. 129, with the note. That such kind of learning as that book is filled with, and the present age is much given to admire, has done no service to the cause of truth, but on the contrary, that it has done infinite disservice, and almost reduced us from the unity of Christian faith to the wrangling of philosophic scepticism, is the opinion of many besides ourselves, and too surely founded on fatal experience." " As to those who are engaged in the study of useful arts and sciences, languages, history, antiquities, physic &c. &c. with a view to make them handmaids to divine knowledge; we honour their employment, desire to emulate their industry, and most sincerely wish them good luck in the name of the Lord. The metaphysical system alluded to above was in great request at Cambridge, between the years 1740 and 1750 ; and was extolled by s

young men who studied it, as a grand repository of human wisdom. The notes were written by Dr. Edmund Law, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle. Having heard so high a character of it, I once sat down to read it, with a prejudice in its favour. I afterwards showed it to Mr. Horne: and, when he had considered it, we could not but lament in secret, what he at length complained of in public, that a work so unfounded and so unprofitable should have engaged the attention, and excited the admiration, of scholars intended for the preaching of the gospel. The account here given of it has something of the caricature; but the leading principle of the book is in substance as the apologist has described it.

Whoever the author of the pamphlet was, he seems to have entered upon his work with a persuasion, that the gentlemen of Oxford, to whom he gives the name of Hutchinsonians, were in such disesteem with the world, so little known by some, and so much disliked by others, that any bold attack upon their characters would be sufficient to run them down: and imagining that his book must have that effect, he foretels them how they must submit, in consequence of it, to "descend and sink into the deepest humiliation," &c. This is not criticism, but unmerciful outrage; and the author has so much of it, that the apologist, having collected it together, concludes with a very pathetic remonstrance: "these, sir, are hard speeches against men, of whom their enemies themselves, being judges, must own, that they are sound in the faith, steady to the church, and regular in their duties—upon an impartial survey of all that has been said or written against us—I must declare, that neither

against the law, neither against the temple, neither against Cæsar, is it proved that we have offended any thing at all," &c. &c.

The reader may perhaps observe upon what I have presented to him, and he would see it more plainly, if he were to read the whole book, as I would advise him to do, that the dispute relates chiefly to the foundations of religion. Of Mr. Hutchinson we hear but little ; his name was the match that gave fire to the train : but the question seems really to have been this ;—whether Christianity, in the truth and spirit of it, ought to be preserved ; or whether a spiritless thing, called by the name of Christianity, would answer the purpose better : in other words, whether the religion of man's philosophy, or the religion of God's revelation, should prevail. If this was the question, a more important one was never agitated since the beginning of the Reformation ; and every true Christian hath an interest in the issue of it. The temper with which Mr. Horne conducted himself, though under very great provocation, is very much to be admired. There never was a piece of invective more and completely taken down than in the *Apology* ; the matter of it is both instructive and curious : several points of divinity, more than my short abstract would admit, are truly and clearly stated : and as to the characters of the writer himself and his friends, we see the crimes of which they were accused, and the defence they were able to make ; of which defence those persons could form no judgment, who had taken their opinion of the parties from the reviews and other disaffected publications of the time ; unless they were wise enough to collect by inference, that

where bad things were so much applauded, that which was dispraised and outraged must have some good in it. As to myself, I freely confess, I am to this hour delighted and edified by that Apology ; and, after so many years, I see no reason to depart from any one of its doctrines ; but should be thankful to God, if all the young clergy of this church were almost and altogether such as Mr. Horne was when he wrote it ; and I heartily rejoice that it is now republished, that they may have an opportunity of reading it. And I would advise, if it were possible, they should see what the learned Dr. Patten wrote in the same year ; who was author of another Apology ; which, with its defence against the Rev. Mr. Ralph Heathcote, displays the meekness of great learning against the vain blusterings of great assurance :¹ and, to show how the Reviews of this country impose upon the ignorant and the credulous, Mr. Heathcote was highly commended, and the character of Dr. Patten was taken from the representation of his adversary, without reading his book.²

Neither Mr. Horne nor his friends could ever be persuaded, that, under the present state of the printed Hebrew text, the labours of an Hebrew collator were at this time wanted by the Christian world ; or that the experiment, from the face with

¹ What David Hume calls the illiberal petulance, arrogance, and scurrility of the Warburtonian school. See his Life, p. 21.

² *Vestra solum legitis, vestra amatis : cæteros, causâ incognitâ, condemnatis.* See the Crit. Rev. for April, 1756. In the year 1759 Dr. Patten preached another sermon before the University, which he printed. In this the subject of his two former pieces is continued, and the argument carried on farther, and well supported.

which it made its appearance, would not be attended with some danger : and it might be owing (as I have said) to their pressing remonstrances, that the plan of a new text, and a new English translation, was laid aside. How far they were right in apprehending evil from it to the Christian cause, doth not appear from any consequences which have yet followed, and we hope it never will. The edition makes a very fine book, which will do honour to the memory of the editor, and, with its various readings, may be a very innocent one, if used with discretion. My learned and worthy friend, the late Rev. Mr. Parkhurst, (the last edition of whose Hebrew Lexicon was patronized by Dr. Horne after he was made a bishop,) speaks of it with due respect: his words are these—"The principal various readings in Dr. Kennicott's Hebrew Bible have been carefully noted, and are submitted to the reader's consideration and judgment. And it is hoped that the use which is here made of that elaborate work cannot fail of being acceptable to every serious and intelligent inquirer into the sense of the Hebrew Scriptures." See the advertisement to the third edition.

Of the friendly way in which Dr. Kennicott and Dr. Horne lived together, forgetting all their former disputes, yet without changing their opinions on either side, so far as I have been able to discover, I have already spoken : but the cause of learning and religion is still, and ever will be, so deeply concerned in the argument between them, that it well deserves to be remembered and understood; and for this reason only I have spent so many words upon it. I may therefore hope to be pardoned, if I still go on to do as much justice

as I can to Dr. Horne's side of the question, by adding one weighty reason which he had (though he did not say much about it) for his suspicions in regard to the good effect of the collating system.¹ He thought it would be of disservice to turn the minds of the learned more toward the letter of the Bible, when they were already too much turned away from the spirit of it. The best fruits of divine wisdom may be gathered from the word of God, in any language, and in any edition. To what the Scripture itself calls the spirit of the Scripture, the learned of late days were become much more inattentive than in past ages. The Puritans of the last century set a proper value upon it, and some of them did well in displaying it: but when their formal manners, with their long prayers, and their long graces, were rejected, their interpretations of the Scripture, and with them all sound interpretations of the kind, fell into disrepute; for men are such hasty reformers, that if they cast out evil, they cast out some good along with it. When tares are plucked up, the wheat is always in danger.

To this cause another may be added. The persons, who since that time have risen into chief repute for parts and learning, had nothing of this in their compositions; such as Clarke, Hoadley, Hare, Middleton, Warburton, Sherlock, South, William Law, Edmund Law, and many others, who have flourished since the Restoration: they either did not know it, or did not relish it, and fell totally into other ways of studying and reasoning: after which it was naturally to be expected in their disciples

¹ In Bishop Hurd's late Life of Dr. Warburton, Dr. Louth is reflected upon for his expectations from the labours of Dr. Kennicott.

that the spirit of the Scripture should be less regarded. This actually did happen, and to such a degree, that many did not even know what was meant by it. Somebody was wanting to revive the knowledge that was lost: but, alas! when this was attempted, the door was shut. This sort of learning, the best and the greatest of which the mind of man is capable in this life, had been so long asleep, that it seemed likely never more to awake. Accordingly, when Mr. Horne sat down to write his Commentary on the Psalms, which proceeds throughout upon the true principle, he was under great anxiety of mind about the reception of it by the world; and expressed his fears in the Preface to the work, telling his readers "he is not insensible that many learned and good men, whom he does not therefore value and respect the less, have conceived strong prejudices against the scheme of interpretation here pursued; and he knows how little the generality of modern Christians are accustomed to speculations of this kind. In the first age of the Church, when the apostolical method of citing and expounding was fresh upon the minds of their followers, the author cannot but be confident, that his Commentary, if it had then made its appearance, would have been universally received and approved as to the general design of it, by the whole Christian world," &c. &c. How unfortunate it is that such strong prejudices should be conceived against that mode of interpretation, in which Christians differ from Jews! But so it is; and so long as it is the custom for learned men to employ their time and talents, as the Masorites did, and more reputation is to be obtained by picking and sifting of letters, than by the apostolical method of

opening the sense and spirit of them, the evil will be rather increasing than diminishing. When fashion invites, vanity will always follow ; critic will succeed to critic, and he that is the boldest will think himself the greatest, till all due veneration for the Bible is lost, and the text is cut and slashed, as if it were no longer a living body, but the subject of a lecture in Surgeons' Hall. While the rage of editing prevails, and the state of the copy is the grand object, we have then too much reason to apprehend, that the spirit of life, which is still to be found, even in the worst copies and poorest editions, will be less regarded and understood. We should have but a mean opinion of the gardener, who should always be clearing and raking his borders, but never raising any thing from them to support the life of man. Thus, if collating ends in collation, the tendency of it may be bad, though it be ever so well executed : and I believe this was, at the bottom, the chief objection against it in the mind of Mr. Horne. He was shy of speaking too plain, through a fear of giving offence ; but the time has now many greater dangers than that of offending some few modern critics and editors.

I relate it as a singular occurrence, that when the mind of Mr. Horne was first filled with the design of commenting upon the Psalms, he should meet with a traveller in a stage-coach, who was in principle the very reverse of himself. The man gave his judgment with all freedom on all subjects of divinity, and among the rest on the use of the Psalms in the service of the Church. The Psalms of David, he said, were nothing to us, and he thought other compositions might be substituted, which were much more to the purpose than David's

Psalms. He happened to be speaking to a person, who could see deeper than most men into the ignorance and folly of his discourse, but was wise enough to hear him with patience, and leave him to proceed in his own way. Yet this poor man was but the pattern of too many more, who want to be taught again, that David was a prophet and speaks of the Messiah where he seems to be speaking of himself; as the apostle St. Peter taught the Jews, in the second chapter of the Acts, and thereby converted three thousand of them at once to the belief of Christ's resurrection.

There is another modern way of criticising upon the Scripture, to which Mr. Horne had no great affection, as thinking it could never be of much service: I mean that custom, which has prevailed since the days of Grotius, of justifying and illustrating the things revealed to us in the Scripture from heathen authorities. I had seen too much of this among some of my acquaintance, persons of no mean learning, but who, instead of employing themselves in the more successful labour of comparing spiritual things with spiritual, in order to understand them, were diligent in collecting parallel passages from heathen authors, to compare them with Scripture; as if the sun wanted the assistance of a candle; or the word of God was not worthy to be received, but so far only as we are able to reconcile it with the wisdom of Greek and Roman authors. He was rather of opinion, with a certain writer, that the Bible will explain all the books in the world, but wants not them to explain it. St. Paul did not think it improper, on certain occasions, to refer to heathen authorities,¹

¹ See Acts, xvii. 23, 28.

and make his use of them for the confirmation of his own doctrine ; but this was done when he was arguing with heathens, not with Christians. There is not the same propriety, when his sublime chapter on the resurrection is compared (as I have seen it) with Plato's doctrine of generation and corruption. Take the heathen doctrine of the origination of mankind, and compare it with the sacred history of Adam in Paradise, and it will soon appear how little the one wants the help of the other.

Quum prorepserunt primis animalia terris
Brutum et turpe pecus, glandem atque cubilia propter
Unguis et pugnis, dein fustibus, atque ita porro
Pugnabant armis, quae post fabricaverat usus :
Donec verba, quibus voces sensusque notarent,
Nominaque invenere—

HOR.

It was a doctrine of the heathen poets, that men, when first made, were without speech, creeping on all-four like beasts, living upon acorns, and lodging like swine in a forest : whereas, when we consult the Bible, we find the first man conversing with his Maker, placed under a state of instruction and probation, and in a condition but little lower than an angel. What must the consequence be, when an attempt is made to reconcile these two accounts, and melt them down together ? Yet was this actually done by the learned Dr. Shuckford, as it may be seen in the last-written preface to his Connexion ; where the history of Adam, and of Eve, and of paradise, and the intercourse of man with his Creator, is commented upon and illustrated from Ovid and Tully, and Mr. Pope's poetical system of deism, called An Esaay on Man ; till the whole is involved in obscurity, and becomes even childish and insignificant ; as if it had been the design of the critic

to expose the sacred history to the contempt of blasphemers and infidels. This abuse of learning Mr. Horne could not see without a mixture of grief and indignation : he is therefore supposed to be the person who, in a little anonymous pamphlet, made his remarks on this unworthy manner of handling the Scripture. While he was young, his zeal was ardent, and his strictures were unreserved. Yet I can never persuade myself, that it was the intention of Dr. Shuckford to put a slight upon the Bible; though he certainly has made the Mosaic account as ridiculous in simplicity, as Dr. Middleton did in malice. I rather think he was betrayed into the mistake by a prevailing custom of the age. When the learned are less studious of the Scripture, and become vain of other learning, it may easily be foreseen how the Scripture must suffer under their expositions ; and, if they do not foresee it, we would refer them for evidence to the Supplemental Discourse on the Creation and Fall of Man, by Dr. Shuckford. The reformer, who dares to censure a corrupt practice, can never be well received by the parties who are in fault. This was the lot of Mr. Horne and his friends. The candle, which they had lighted at the Scripture, and held up to show some dangers and absurdities in modern learning, was blown out, and they themselves were accused as persons of great zeal and little understanding. How often do we see, that when men should be reformed, and are not, they are only provoked past remedy ! This being, upon the whole, but an unpleasant subject, I shall proceed to one that will entertain us better.

A letter of July the 25th, 1755, informed me that Mr. Horne, according to an established custom at Magdalen College in Oxford, had begun to preach

before the University, on the day of St. John the Baptist. For the preaching of this annual sermon a permanent pulpit of stone is inserted into a corner of the first quadrangle ; and, so long as the stone pulpit was in use (of which I have been a witness) the quadrangle was furnished round the sides with a large fence of green boughs, that the preaching might more nearly resemble that of John the Baptist in the wilderness ; and a pleasant sight it was : but for many years the custom hath been discontinued, and the assembly have thought it safer to take shelter under the roof of the chapel. Our forefathers, it seems, were not so much afraid of being injured by the falling of a little rain, or the blowing of the wind, or the shining of the sun upon their heads. The preacher of 1755, pleased the audience very much by his manner and style, and all agreed that he had a very fine imagination : but he was not very well pleased with the compliment. As a Christian teacher, he was much more desirous that his hearers should receive and understand, and enter into the spirit of the doctrines he had delivered ; but in this he found them slower than he wished, and laments it heavily in a private letter.

Two sermons on the subject of St. John the Baptist were printed, and many others succeeded which were not printed : for the author, at last, on a review of what he had done, thought it more advisable to throw the matter out of that form, and cast an abridgment of the whole into the form of Considerations : on which performance I have already spoken my mind, and, I believe, the mind of every competent judge. I can only say here, that if there be any Christian reader, who wishes to know what a

saint is, and aspires to be one himself, let him keep before his eyes that beautiful and finished picture of St. John the Baptist, to the executing of which but one person of the age was equal. But behold how this was described by the Critical reviewers of the time! "In the Considerations," they say, "there are some judicious and solid remarks relative to practice, but nothing to engage the attention of a curious, inquisitive, or critical reader." They might have said the same of the Sermon on the Mount. It looks as if they would have been better pleased with a dissertation upon the manner in which the wild honey was made and collected for John to eat,¹

¹ Many examples might be given, to illustrate the distinction between Christian divinity, by which men are edified, and curious divinity, by which they are only amused and entertained. We read in the gospel, Luke, xix. 4, that Zaccheus climbed up into a sycamore-tree, to see Jesus pass by, and was led by that circumstance to repentance and salvation. When this case is considered by the Christian divine, he dwells upon the circumstance of Zaccheus's desiring to see the Saviour of the world, and the inestimable blessing of being called by him, as Zaccheus was, to a state of salvation. But when the curious divine hears that Zaccheus climbs up into a tree, he climbs up after him; not to see what he saw, but to examine the nature of the tree and ascertain to what species of plants, botanically considered, it properly belongs.

In this example we have two very different modes of treating the Scripture. No man that loves learning will condemn the critical disquisitor: let him pursue his inquiries; there is no harm in them: but when he presumes, as from an upper region, to disdain the Christian divine, as unworthy of all commendation, he pays too great a compliment to his own importance, and raises a very just suspicion against his own religious principles. The case of Zaccheus is considered in the Christian way by Bishop Hall, (see Mr. Glasse's edition, vol. iii. p. 219,) and matter enough for the critical way may be found in the Voyages of Frederick Hasselquist, p. 129, et alib. The same inquisitive person was, as he tells us, very solicitous to discover what kind of tree in particular David had his eye upon in the first Psalm: which never can be discovered, if his expressions, as they seem, have an allusion to the Tree of Life. See our author's Commentary on the First Psalm, who inclines to this opinion.

properly interspersed with quotations from Atheneus and other authors, to show the learning of the writer, and that, perhaps, but impertinently introduced. When there is a party always ready, and always upon the watch, to hinder the success of every good attempt, and mislead the ignorant on subjects of the first importance, such a writer as the author of those Considerations had little chance of escaping. Their artifices had been so well observed and understood by him, that he was able to predict their proceedings. When I had printed a discourse on the Mosaic Distinction of Animals in the Book of Leviticus, which had cost me much research and meditation, under the title of Zoolo-gia Ethica, in which I had traced the moral intention of that curious institution, he foretold me how it would be represented to the public; that the critics would select some part of the work, which was either ambiguous in itself, or might be made so by their manner of exhibiting it, and give that as a specimen of the plan, to discourage the examination of it. "The passage (said he,) at page 19, &c. about the camel and the swine will probably be selected by the Reviewers, given to the reader without a syllable of the evidence, and then the whole book dismissed with a sneer." In a few months after, his prediction was so exactly verified, that one would have suspected him to have been in the secret. "If you look into the Critical Review; you will be tempted to think I wrote the article on the Zoolo-gia, to verify my own prediction. Without giving the least account of your plan, and the arguments by which it is so irrefragably supported and demonstrated, the ———— give the very passage about the swine and the camel, and conclude the

whole scheme to be visionary, and problematical, as they phrase it."¹ Thus is a malignant party gratified, and the public is beguiled by false accounts: the deception may continue for a time; but truth and justice generally take place at last.

There is a portion of the New Testament, very interesting and full of matter, on which the author of the Considerations, soon after he was in holy orders, bestowed much thought and labour; I mean the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. On this he composed at least twenty sermons; which are all excellent; but being more agreeable to the spirit of the first ages than of the present, he was not forward, though frequently solicited, to give them to the world. He objected, that they wanted to be reviewed with a more critical eye, and even to be recomposed; and that this would be a work of time. Toward the latter end of his life, however, he set about it, but got no further than through the third discourse. The first is on the Character of Abel, the second on Enoch, the third on Noah. Of these I have the copy, and hope it will be published. Whoever looks at them, will wish he had lived to satisfy his mind about all the rest. They would certainly have been improved by such a revision; yet, perhaps, not so much as he supposed. First thoughts, upon a favourite subject are warm and lively; and the language they bring with them is strong and natural; but prudence is apt to be cold and timor-

¹ The date of the letter from which this extract is taken is Feb. 12, 1772. The work, thus unfairly treated, I sent to the learned Bishop Newton, a writer of profound skill in the language of the Scripture; who allowed that I had proved the moral intention of that law which is the subject of it.

ous; and, while it adds a polish, takes away something from the spirit of a composition.

But the greatest work of his life, of which he now began to form the design, was a Commentary on the whole Book of Psalms. In the year 1758, he told me how he had been meditating on the Book of Psalms, and had finished those for the first day of the month, upon the following plan :¹

1. An analysis of the Psalm, by way of argument.
2. A paraphrase on each verse.
3. The substance digested into a prayer.

"The work (said he) delights me greatly, and seems, so far as I can judge of my own turn and talents, to suit me the best of any I can think of. May He, who hath the keys of David, prosper it in my hand ; granting me the knowledge and utterance necessary to make it serviceable to the church !" Let any person of judgment peruse the work, and he will see how well the author has succeeded, and kept up the spirit of it to the end. His application of the book of Psalms is agreeable to the testimony so repeatedly given to it, and the use made of it, in the New Testament. This question is stated and settled beyond a doubt, in a learned preface to the work. The style is that of an accomplished writer ; and its ornaments distinguish the vigour of his imagination. That all readers should admire it as I do, is not to be expected ; yet it has certainly met with great admiration ; and I have seen letters to him, from persons of the first judgment, on the publication of the book. It will never be neglected, if the church and its religion should continue ; for which he prayed fervently

¹ This plan he afterwards thought proper to alter, and, as it is judged, for the better.

every day of his life. When it first came from the press, Mr. Daniel Prince, his bookseller at Oxford, was walking to or from Magdalen College with a copy of it under his arm. "What have you there, Mr. Prince?" said a gentleman who met him. "This, sir, is a copy of Dr. Horne's Psalms, just now finished. The president, sir, began to write very young: but this is the work in which he will always live." In this Mr. Prince judged very rightly: he will certainly live in this work; but there are many others of his works in which he will not die, till all learning and piety shall die with him.

His Commentary on the Psalms was under his hand about twenty years. The labour, to which he submitted in the course of the work, was prodigious: his reading for many years was allotted chiefly to this subject; and his study and meditation together produced as fine a work, and as finely written, as most in the English language. There are good and learned men, who cannot but speak well of the work, and yet are forward to let us know, that they do not follow Dr. Horne as an interpreter. I believe them; but this is one of the things we have to lament; and, while they may think this an honour to their judgment, I am afraid it is a symptom that we are retrograde in theological learning. The author was sensible, that, after the pleasure he had received in studying for the work, and the labour of composing and correcting, he was to offer what the age was ill prepared to receive. This put him upon his guard; and the work is in some respects the better for it, and in others not so good; it is more cautiously and correctly written, but perhaps not so richly furnished

with matter as it might have been. Had he been composing a novel, he would have been under none of these fears: his imagination might then have taken its course, without a bridle, and the world would have followed as fast as he could wish.

The first edition in quarto was published in the year 1776, when the author was Vice-chancellor; and it happened, soon after its publication, that I was at Paris. There was then a Christian University in the place! and I had an opportunity of recommending it to some learned gentlemen who were members of it, and understood the English language well. I took the liberty to tell them, our church had lately been enriched by a Commentary on the Psalms, the best, in our opinion, that had ever appeared; and such as St. Austin would have perused with delight, if he had lived to see it. At my return the author was so obliging as to furnish me with a copy to send over to them as a present; and I was highly gratified by the approbation with which it was received. With those who could read English, it was so much in request, that I was told the book was never out of hand; and I apprehend more copies were sent for. Every intelligent Christian, who once knows the value of it, will keep it, to the end of his life, as the companion of his retirement: and I can scarcely wish a greater blessing to the age, than that it may daily be better known and more approved.

About the time when it was published, that systematical infidel, David Hume, died. It had been the aim of his life, to invent a sort of philosophy, that should effect the overthrow of Christianity. For this he lived; and his ambition was to die, or

be thought to die, hard and impenitent, yea, and even cheerful and happy ; to show the world the power of his own principles : which, however, were weakly founded, and so inconsistent with common sense, that Dr. Beattie attacked and demolished them in the life-time of the author. Special pains were taken by Hume himself, and by his friends after him, to persuade the world, that his life, at the last stage of it, was perfectly tranquil and composed : and the part is so laboured and over-acted, that there is just cause of suspicion, even before the detection appears. Dr. Horne, whose mind was ever in action for some good end, could not sit still, and see the public so imposed upon. He addressed an anonymous Letter to Dr. Adam Smith from the Clarendon Press ; of which the argument is so clear, and the humour so easy and natural, that no honest man can keep his countenance while he reads it, and none but an infidel can be angry. While Dr. Adam Smith affects to be very serious and solemn in the cause of his friend Hume, the author of the letter plays them both off with wonderful effect. He alludes to certain anecdotes concerning Mr. Hume, which are very inconsistent with the account given in his life : for at the very period when he is reported not to have suffered a moment's abatement of his spirits, none of his friends dared to mention the name of a certain author in his presence, lest it should throw him into a transport of passion and swearing : a certain indication that his mind had been greatly hurt ; and nobody will think it was without reason, if he will read the Essay on Truth by Dr. Beattie ; which is not only a confutation of Hume's philosophy ; it is much more ; it is an extirpation of his principles,

and delivers them to be scattered like stubble by the winds.

The letter to Dr. Adam Smith, like the *Essay of Dr. Beattie*, has a great deal of truth, recommended by a great deal of wit: and if the reader has not seen it, he has some pleasure in store. We allow to the memory of Dr. Adam Smith, that he was a person of quick understanding and diligent research, in things relating merely to this world; of which, his *Inquiry into the Causes of the Wealth of Nations* will be a lasting monument; and it is a work of great use to those who would obtain a comprehensive view of business and commerce: but when he set up Mr. Hume as a pattern of perfection, and judged of all religion by the principles of that philosopher, he was very much out of his line.

The Letter was followed in course of time by Letters on Infidelity; which are very instructive and entertaining, and highly proper for the preventing or lessening that respect which young people may conceive unawares for unbelieving philosophers. It has been objected by some readers of a more severe temper, that these Letters are occasionally too light: and I must confess, I should have been as well pleased, if the story of Dr. Radcliffe and his man had been omitted: but there is this to be said, that these are not sermons, but familiar letters; that Dr. Horne considered the profession of infidelity, as a thing more ridiculous and insignificant in itself, than some of his learned readers might do; that, as it appeared in some

¹ In his preface to these Letters, the author has endeavoured to obviate this objection; and we think he has done it very sufficiently.

persons, it was really too absurd to be treated with seriousness ; and, as Voltaire had treated religion with ridicule instead of argument, and had done infinite mischief by it, justice required that he and his friends should be treated a little in their own way.¹ Besides, as infidels have nothing to support them but their vanity, let them once appear as ridiculous as they are impious, and they cannot live. They can never approve themselves, but so far only as they are upheld and approved by other people.

Though the imagination of Dr. Horne was sometimes at play when the speculum of infidelity was in his hand, his heart was always serious : thence it came to pass, that the composition of sermons was a work never out of his mind ; and it was the desire and the pleasure of his life to make himself useful in the pulpit wherever he went. The plan which he commonly proposed to himself in preaching upon a passage of the Scripture was that of giving, 1. The literal sense of it : then, 2. The interpretation or spirit of it : and 3. The practical or moral use of it, in an application to the audience : and he was of opinion, that one discourse, composed upon this plan, was worth twenty immethodical essays; as being more instructive in the matter, more intelligible in the delivery, and more

¹ One of the severest reflections that ever came from the pen of Dr. Horne, was aimed, as I suppose, at this Mr. David Hume : yet it is all very fair. This philosopher had observed, that all the devout persons he had ever met with were melancholy : which is thus answered : “ This might very probably be; for, in the first place, it is most likely that he saw very few, his friends and acquaintance being of another sort ; and, secondly, the sight of him would make a devout person melancholy at any time.” Serm. vol. iii p. 96. These letters are a demonstration that all devout persons are not melancholy.

easily retained in the memory. Yet, after long practice, he came to a determination, that no method was more excellent, than that of taking some narrative of the Scripture, and raising moral observations on the several circumstances of it in their order. His Sermon on Lot in Sodom, vol. ii. disc. 1, and on Daniel in Babylon, vol. ii. disc. 8, are of this kind. The Noble Convert, or History of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch, vol. ii. disc. 3, is another, The Paralytic, and the Woman taken in Adultery, belong to the same class. One of the most skilful and excellent preachers this Church could ever boast, was the late Dr. Heylyn, a Prebendary of Westminster. His discourse on the Canaanite was considered by Dr. Horne as a most perfect and elegant model of a sermon, on a miracle, or any other portion of the Scripture; he pronounced it to be succinct, clear, and forcible, with nothing in it superfluous or tiresome: and, it came into his mind, on reading it, that another after the same model might be composed on the Samaritan woman and the discourse our Saviour held with her. This he lived to execute. It is still among his unpublished discourses, and is itself worthy to be printed as a specimen of this manner.

There are certainly different modes of preaching, all of which are good in their way: some are most proper for one subject, some for another. One of these is that of Jesus Christ himself; who, from present occasions, and circumstances of time and place, made use of the opportunity to raise such doctrines as were wanting for the instruction of his hearers: the mind being under the best preparation for the conceiving of truth, when that truth is raised from the objects of its present attention. We see

our Saviour at a well of water (a precious object in hot countries) discoursing on the waters of life, to a person who came in the heat of the day, to draw the water of the well. After this example did Dr. Horne, when he was at the sea-side at Brithelmstone, take the sea for the subject of a sermon; one of the most ingenious he ever composed; and, without question, peculiarly striking to the audience, who had the object before their eyes. This naturally reminds me of a reflection he made, when, with other young people of the university, he attended a course of chemical lectures at Oxford. It was the custom of Dr. Alcock to carry his pupils over such ground as rendered the science of great service to every person of a learned profession. The last lecture was upon poisons: and the subject required, that snakes should be produced upon the table, and made to bite poor harmless animals to death; whose cries, and howlings, and convulsions, after the wounds given, were extremely affecting, and made some of the spectators ready to faint. On which he observed afterwards—"that would have been the moment to have delivered a theological lecture on the old serpent of the Scripture—that hath the power of death—and first brought it, with all its fatal symptoms and miseries, into the world!" And he judged right; it would have been better understood, and more felt, at that time than at any other; for it is not to be calculated how much the mind is assisted in its contemplations by the senses of the body, giving life to its ideas, and working irresistibly upon the passions.

The last literary work which Dr. Horne proposed to execute, while Dean of Canterbury, was a formal Defence of the Divinity of Christ against

the objections of Dr. Priestley ; in which it was his intention to show, how that writer had mistaken and perverted the Scripture and the Liturgy.

I have often wondered secretly, why this good man should have felt as if he was called upon to encounter a writer of Dr. Priestley's disposition, who had already passed under the strong hand of Dr. Horsley, and would have been humbled for the time to come, had he been blessed with any feeling. That Dr. Priestley is a man of parts, a versatile genius, and of great sagacity in philosophical experiments, is well known and universally allowed: but let any person follow him closely, and he will see, that if ever there was a wise man, of whom it might be said, that the more he learnt, the less he understood, it will be found true of Dr. Priestley. His vanity made him believe, that he was wise enough to enlighten, and powerful enough to disturb the world: he was therefore for ever busy at one of these or the other; a volcano, constantly throwing out matter for the increase of heresy, schism, or sedition, and never to be quenched by disputing. It is the way of the world, to make their estimate of a man from his parts and abilities; but it is more wise and just to measure him by the use he makes of them, to the benefit or the hurt of mankind: for the beams of the sun are used to warm and animate; while the brightness of lightning is to shatter and consume. So long as Dr. Priestley felt nothing (or seemed to feel nothing) it had a bad effect upon him, and made him more troublesome, that such persons as Dr. Horsley and Dr. Horne should enter the lists against him: it made him appear more formidable in the eye of the public, and so it tended to gratify the prevailing passion

of his mind. So far indeed as he deceived and disturbed others, a compassionate regard to them might be the motive with those who disputed with him.

In the year 1786 Dr. Horne preached a sermon at the primary visitation of the archbishop at Canterbury, on the duty of contending earnestly for the faith; and when this was printed, together with another discourse on the Trinity, he subjoined an advertisement, declaring his intention to answer the objections against the Divinity of Christ, which had been urged of late. "Indulgence," said he, "is requested as to the article of time: I cannot write so fast as Dr. Priestley does; and I wish to execute the work with care and attention; after which it shall be left to the judgment of the learned, the pious, and the candid, of all denominations." At the close of this year, he alludes to the advertisement, in a letter from Canterbury: "You see the task I have undertaken." And here nobody will wonder, that as he had given me his assistance in the first work I published, and its chief merit had been owing to that circumstance, he should demand of me in return any service he thought it in my power to execute; he therefore goes on, "It is undertaken in confidence of your friendly aid; and I should be happy, as we began together with Clayton, if we might end together with Priestley." For the sake of Dr. Horne, I was ready to work under him, in any capacity he should prescribe; but it always appeared to me, that Priestley was a person of too coarse a mind to be the proper object of a serious argument. That he had borrowed most of his objections, I had very little doubt; and that his remarks on Jews, Gnostics,

Ebionites, Plato, Philo, and Justin Martyr, were not original ; there being a magazine in store, to which the orthodox of this country do but rarely apply themselves. If this could have been pointed out, it would have done more toward the curing of his readers, and given more mortification to himself, than the most laboured confutation of the matter in the four volumes of his Objections.

Dr. Horne, I am very sure, had a mean opinion of Priestley's originality as a scholar : he speaks of him under the character of a man, who is defying all the world, and cannot construe a common piece of Greek or Latin.¹ I find another note concerning him, with the date of 1788 affixed to it, taken from Dr. Johnson, who spoke his opinion of Priestley to Mr. Badcock in these words : " You have proved him as deficient in probity as he is in learning." Mr. Badcock had called him an index-scholar : but Johnson was not willing to allow him even that merit; saying, that he borrowed from those who had been borrowers themselves, and did not know that the mistakes he adopted had been answered by others.² There was an expectation about this time, that a controversy would break out between Priestley and Gibbon ; of which an arch Quaker spoke thus : " Let those who deny, and those who corrupt, the true religion of Jesus Christ, fight it out together ; and let his faithful followers enjoy their mutual overthrow."³

In the eyes of all reasonable men, the Church of England could want but little defence, in a literary way, against an adversary so inflamed with political

¹ Letter, Aug. 22, 1786.

² See the Gentleman's Magazine for July, 1785, p. 596.

³ Ibid, p. 600.

hatred against it, and openly avowing a design to undermine and blow up its foundations, as with an explosion of gunpowder.¹ When it comes to this, the dispute is no longer literary: the person who carries it on in this way, should be considered (if a gentleman) as a person of an unsound mind; if not a gentleman, then as an object of the penal laws of his country, if it should have any against such offenders. One who is so wild and dangerous in his politics, must be a counterfeit in his Christianity; who, being detected, is thereby sufficiently answered.

On these considerations, without any view to the sparing of my own trouble, I was as well pleased to see that the design of writing further against Priestley was not prosecuted with vigour. How much had been collected for this purpose I do not find; yet I know that the subject had been long and often in the mind of Dr. Horne; who told me, when at Nayland, in the year 1789, he had satisfied himself in respect to every objection from the Liturgy, except one; and that was from an expression in the Athanasian Creed, which sounded like Tritheism; the Creed affirming each person by himself to be God and Lord. I ventured to assure him, that the passage gave me no trouble, because I did not consider it as a metaphysical assertion, but as a plain reference to the words of the Scripture; which to each person of the God-head, distinctly taken by himself, so far as that can be done, does certainly give the titles both of God

¹ It was an observation of Dr. Horne, upon the curious sermon on Free Inquiry, that the author spoke of this powder-plot against the Church of England with as much certainty as if he had held the lantern.

and Lord.¹ In this, therefore, instead of depending on the Creed, we only depend, as that does, upon the words of the Scripture. With this he was satisfied, and allowed that such an intention in the Creed removed the difficulty.

The last considerable affair in which he concerned himself while Dean of Canterbury, was an application from the bishops of the Episcopal Church of Scotland; three of whom, in the year 1789, came up to London, to petition parliament for relief from the hard penalties under which they had long suffered. This they ventured to do, in consideration of the loyalty and attachment they had lately professed toward the king and the constitution.

The penal laws had reduced the Scotch Episcopal Church to a condition so depressed and obscure, that it could scarcely be known to exist, but by such persons as were previously acquainted with its history. Among these, none entered more willingly and warmly than the then good Dean of Canterbury. As soon as he heard of the arrival of the Scotch bishops at London, he was anxious to let them know how heartily he approved of the object of their journey, and kindly offered every assistance in his power to bring the matter to a happy conclusion. He paid them every mark of attention both at London and Oxford; and, when they set out on their return to Scotland, without having attained their object, he expressed, in very affectionate terms, his concern at their disappointment, and told them at parting not to be disengaged; for, said he, “your cause is good, and

¹ See John, xx. 28; Acts, v. 4; xxviii. 25, and many other like passages.

your request so reasonable, that it cannot long be denied."

In February, 1791, after having taken his seat in the House of Lords as Bishop of Norwich, he wrote a friendly letter to Bishop Skinner of Aberdeen, assuring him and the other members of the committee for managing the business of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, that any help in his power should be at their service: and speaking of their applying anew to both houses of parliament, he said, "It grieved him to think they had so much heavy work to do over again; but business of that sort required patience and perseverance."

It was said about this time, that the Lord Chancellor, Thurlow, withheld his consent to the Scotch Episcopal Bill, till he should be satisfied by some of the English prelates, that there really were bishops in Scotland. When Bishop Horne was waited upon with this view by the committee of the Scotch Church, and one of them observed, that his lordship could assure the Chancellor they were good bishops, he answered, with his usual affability and good humour, "Yes, Sir, much better bishops than I am."

A clergyman of Scotland, who had received English ordination, applied to him, wishing to be considered as under the jurisdiction of some English bishop; that is, to be, in effect, independent of the bishops of Scotland in their own country; but he gave no countenance to the proposal, and advised the person who made it quietly to acknowledge the bishop of the diocese in which he lived, who, he knew, would be ready to receive him into communion, and require nothing of him but what was necessary to maintain the order and unity of a

Christian Church ; assuring him, at the same time, that if he were a private clergyman himself, he should be glad to be under the authority of such a bishop. One anecdote more upon this subject, and I have done.

From the present circumstances of its primitive orthodoxy, piety, poverty, and depressed state, he had such an opinion of this Church, as to think, that, if the great apostle of the Gentiles were upon earth, and it were put to his choice with what denomination of Christians he would communicate, the preference would probably be given to the Episcopilians of Scotland, as most like to the people he had been used to. This happened, as I perfectly recollect, while we were talking together on the subject of the Scotch petition, on one of the hills near the city of Canterbury, higher than the pinnacles of the cathedral, where there was no witness to our discourse but the sky that was over our heads ; and yet, when all things are duly considered, I think no good man would have been angry, if he had overheard us.

The life of Dr. Horne, during his episcopate, affords but few incidents considerable enough to be here related : but there was one, which became the subject of much conversation between him and some of his friends. In the summer of the year 1790, he was on a visit at the seat of a gentleman in Norfolk, for whom he had a great regard. I met his lordship there, by his appointment ; and it so happened, that, during our visit, Mr. John Wesley was upon his circuit about the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, and came to a market-town very near us. Here he had many followers ; and, being desirous of preaching to a large congregation, he sent

some of his friends to the minister of the place, to ask for the use of the parish church for the forenoon of the next day. The clergyman was under some difficulty how to conduct himself; but, recollecting that the bishop of the diocese was near at hand, he advised them to go and ask his permission. The messengers accordingly went; and the bishop sent them back to the clergyman with this answer: "Mr. Wesley is a regularly ordained clergyman of the Church of England; and if the minister makes no objection, I shall make none." So it was determined that Mr. Wesley should preach in the church the next day.

For the sake of those who admire Bishop Horne's works, and were not acquainted with his person, it may be proper before I conclude, to say something of his natural life. When he first came to the University of Oxford, he was quite a boy; but being at a time of life when boys alter very fast, he soon grew up into a person so agreeable, that, at the opening of the Radcliffe Library, when all were assembled and made their best appearance, I heard it said of him, that there was not then a handsomer young man in the theatre. But he was not of a strong and muscular constitution; and from the disadvantage of being very near-sighted, (quite helpless without the use of a glass,) he did not render himself more robust by the practice of any athletic exercise. Amusements of that sort gave him more trouble than they were worth, and he never pursued them with any alacrity. It is related of Bishop Bull, that he was not addicted to any innocent pleasure, which is often necessary to unbend the mind, and preserve the body in health and vigour. The only diversion (if it may be called

a diversion) to which this great man was addicted, was the enjoyment of agreeable conversation : and the same was the favourite amusement of Dr. Horne to the end of his life. I wish every young man, who is intended for a scholar, had some good or some necessary reason for not being led away by any sort of recreation. It was of service to his mind that he was no fisherman, no shooter, no hunter, no horseman : the cultivation of his understanding was therefore carried on with less interruption, and his improvements were rapid. While on horseback he seemed to be in more danger than other young men : and he had a friend, who was so much concerned for his safety, that he sometimes rode after him, to watch over him, without letting him know of it. But so it happened, notwithstanding his vigilance, that he saw him suffer one bad fall, upon a dirty road, into a deep slough, and another upon very hard ground in the middle of the summer. His horse was then upon a gallop, and the fall pitched him upon his forehead ; but, by the protection of a good Providence, the blow only gave him a head-ach, which soon went off without any other ill effect. When he came at last to be a bishop, the friend, who had formerly been his attendant, reminded him of these accidents, and observed upon them, " My lord, I saw you fall twice, I have seen you rise three times :" meaning, that he had first risen to be President of Magdalen College, then to be Dean of Canterbury, and afterwards Bishop of Norwich. The year after he came to Oxford, he fell sick of the small-pox, which proved very favourable, and he was removed to a house upon the hill at Headington for an airing ; where his recovery had raised his spirits

to such a pitch, that his friends could not but observe the growing vigour of his mind, and augurate that his wits were intended for some very active part upon the stage of human life, as it afterwards proved.

In the year 1758 he was appointed junior Proctor of the University; on the 27th of April, 1759, he took the degree of B.D. and on the 28th of January, 1764, that of D.D. His health continued tolerably good, till the time of his proctorship: and here it ought in justice to be remembered, that he made one of the best proctors ever known in the University of Oxford. He was strict in the exercise of his office; but his strictness was accompanied by so much mildness and goodness, that he was equally beloved and feared. His duty called upon him to visit and inspect the houses of poor and disorderly people; in one of which he took the measles, and suffered much by that distemper. The time at which this accident happened was in one respect rather unfortunate; for he was confined at the time when he should have resigned his office by a personal attendance in the theatre. Dr. Thurlow, the late Bishop of Durham, being at that time Collector, delivered the Latin speech, at the close of which he spoke to this effect: "As to the late Proctor, I shall speak of him but in few words, for the truth of which I can appeal to all that are here present. If ever virtue itself was visible and dwelt upon earth, it was in the person who this day lays down his office." Which words were followed by an universal clapping. It was fortunate in one respect that he was not present; for thus it came to pass, that full justice was done to his character.

On the 27th of January, 1768, on the death of

Dr. Jenner, he was elected President of Magdalen College : in 1771 he was appointed Chaplain in ordinary to his Majesty ; which appointment he held till he was preferred to the deanery of Canterbury, on the 22d of September 1781 : and on the 7th of June 1791 he was consecrated Bishop of Norwich in Lambeth Chapel, on the translation of Dr. Bagot to the see of St. Asaph. After he became President of Magdalen College, he adhered to the interest of Mr. Jenkinson (now Earl of Liverpool) a little to the disturbance of his academical peace. Mr. Jenkinson had been one of his contemporaries at University College : a gentleman who, from his first appearance in the University, always promised to do something, and to be something, beyond other men of his time. It was not possible that two such young men as he and Mr. Horne could be near neighbours without being fond of each other's company. The friendship once formed was ever after preserved : and when Mr. Jenkinson, though well known to be of what was then called the Court party, offered himself to represent the University in Parliament, his two friends, the President of Magdalen, and the Master of University College, voted for him without success. Their departure on this occasion from what was then thought the old and proper interest of the University, brought upon them some animadversions from a few of the warmest advocates on the other side ; and little scurrilous wit-ticisms flew about against them both in the newspapers ; which, so far as their own persons were concerned, had little effect upon either, but that of exciting their laughter ; and they have often been

heard to make themselves merry with several passages of that time.

Soon after he was advanced to the Presidentship of Magdalen College, he married the only daughter of Philip Burton, esq., a lady for whom he always preserved the most inviolate affection. By her he had three daughters; of whom the eldest is married to the Rev Mr. Selby Hele, and the youngest to the Rev. Mr. Hole. The unmarried daughter resides with Mrs. Horne, at Uxbridge. The former residence of this family near Windsor introduced him to the acquaintance of several great and respectable characters in that neighbourhood, particularly Sir George Howard, who received, and may probably have preserved, many of his letters.¹

In the year 1776 he was appointed Vice-chancellor of the University, and continued in that office till October 1780. His vice-chancellorship introduced him to the acquaintance of Lord North, then Chancellor of the University: a nobleman, who to a fine temper and pleasant wit, had added such good principles and useful learning, that he found in Dr. Horne a person exactly suited to his own mind: and I suppose it owing to the united interest of Lord North and the present Earl of Liverpool, that he was made Dean of Canterbury. When this happened, he would willingly have

¹ I recollect in this place an accident which happened to one of his letters. He corresponded formerly with Mr. Price of Epsom, whose lady was the sister of Andrew Stone, esq. By a mistake one of these letters fell into the hands of Mr. Stone; and it happened to contain some free remarks upon the lives and characters of courtiers. When this was lamented as an unfortunate circumstance, "No, no," said Mr. Price, "no misfortune at all—very proper those busy gentlemen in high life should see what learned men think of them and their situation."

quitted his cares at Oxford, and taken up his residence in Kent, his native county; but that a friend, to whose judgment he owed respect, would not agree to the prudence of such a step. As for the Dean himself, worldly advantage was no object with him; he lived as he ought; and, if he was no loser at the year's end, he was perfectly satisfied. This I know, because I have it under his own hand, that he laid up nothing from his preferments in the Church. What he gave away was with such secrecy, that it was supposed by some persons to be little: but, after his death, when the pensioners, to whom he had been a constant benefactor, rose up to look about them for some other support, then it began to be known who and how many they were. He complained to one of his most intimate friends, how much it was out of his way to discover such objects as were worthy and proper, because he descended so little into commerce with the world; yet, said he, let any body show me, in any case, what ought to be done, and they will always find me ready to do it. So far as he knew, he did good; and often attempted it, when he could not know; which is more or less the case with every charitable man. The discernment of objects is the privilege of God alone; who yet doeth good unto all, where we know it not.

As often as he was at Canterbury, his time passed very pleasantly: he was in his native country: the families of the place and the neighbourhood showed him the greatest respect, and were delighted with his company and conversation: if he could have indulged himself, with prudence, as he wished to do, he would have fixed himself there for the remainder of his life: but he still submitted to

the unsettled life of a pilgrim, between the two situations of his college and his deanery: with every thing that lay between Oxford and Canterbury he was acquainted, and with little besides. In the year 1788, his constitutional infirmities began to increase upon him : " I have been more than ever harassed (said he) this year, for four months past, with defluxions on my head and breast ; they have driven me to take the benefit of the Headington air, this charming season,¹ which, by God's blessing, will enable me to get clear for the summer, I believe. But, as I grow older, I shall dread the return of winter. Do you know what could be done in the way of preservative ? My good friends of the Church wish me to continue here, and engage to do the business of the midsummer chapter without me. I am urged to get once more upon a horse—as much like an ass as possible. Long disuse hath now been added to an original awkwardness : however, by keeping to a gentle pace, I shall avoid going off, as you remember it was my hap once to do, like a frog from a board." The visiting of some watering-place, Brighthelmstone, or Ramsgate, for the benefit of sea-bathing, had often been of great service to him. But notwithstanding all that could be done, he grew old faster than his years would account for, being now only in his fifty-seventh year: so that when a design was formed of making him a bishop, he felt himself by no means inclined to undertake the charge of so weighty an office ; and it was not till after much reasoning with himself, that he was prevailed upon to accept it. I do not remember, that I ever took upon me, while this

¹ The letter is dated May 20, 1788.

affair was depending, to throw in one word of advice, for it or against it; but rather that I left all things to work, as Providence should direct.¹ It was a sincere affliction to me, when I attended him at Norwich, to see how his limbs began to fail him. The palace there is entered by a large flight of steps; on which he observed one day, "Alas! I am come to these steps, at a time of life when I can neither go up them nor down them with safety." However, he resisted his infirmities with a degree of resolution. He accustomed himself to walk early in the garden by my persuasion; and assented to it, in his pleasant way, with these words: "Mr. William," (for so it had been his custom to call me for many years,) "I have heard you say, that the air of the morning is a dram to the mind: I will rise to-morrow and take a dram." That the faculties of his mind did not fail, in the way it was imagined, so long as he remained at Norwich, I could show by the contents of the last letter he wrote to me, within a few weeks of his death; in which there is the same humour and spirit as had distinguished him in the prime of his life. That he was not subject to fits of weakness in his mind, I do not say: he could not per-

¹ Very soon after the nomination of Dean Horne to the see of Norwich, a clergyman of that city, calling upon a clergyman of the city of London, said to him, "Report tells us, that the Dean of Canterbury is to be our bishop." "Yes," said the London clergyman, "so I hear, and I am glad of it, for he will make a truly Christian Bishop."—"Indeed!" replied the other: "well, I do not know him myself, being a Cambridge man; but it is currently reported at Norwich that he is a Methodist." The same clergyman, when he became acquainted with his bishop, was much delighted with him; and afterwards lamented his death as a great loss to the Christian Church in general and to the diocese of Norwich in particular.

severe in a train of thought, as he used to do, but applied himself by short intervals, as his ability would permit; and in that way he could execute more than we should have expected from him, under his bodily infirmities. From two visits to Bath he had received sensible benefit, and was meditating a third, when I left him in the autumn of 1791, which he had been requested not to defer too long. At my departure from Norwich, he carried me in his coach about ten miles; and we conversed by the way on the subject of his charge, of which his mind was full, and which he was then beginning to print. When I had made him a promise to meet him during his next visit at Bath, he set me down at Lodden, and I betook myself to my horses. That moment will for ever dwell, like a black spot, upon the mind, in which we had the last sight of a beloved friend. After this parting I never saw him more. His company I can now seek only in his writings; which are almost my daily delight. His journey to Bath, contrary to the persuasion of his friends, was deferred too long. Yet he had still such remaining vigour in his mind, that he did not intend to make his visit to Bath an idle one; but selected from his manuscript sermons a sufficient number to compose a volume, and took them with him, intending to employ a printer at Bath upon them. To this he was partly encouraged by an observation his good and affectionate lady had made upon him, from the experience of several years, that he never seemed to be so well as when he had printers about him; of which he had even then seen a striking example at Norwich. But, alas! while he was upon the road, he suffered a

paralytic stroke, and, though very ill, finished his journey. Mrs. Horne after this wrote me a letter full of hope, that, as the bishop could walk to the pump-room daily, he would still recover: in consequence of which, I went with some courage to London, intending to go on from thence to Bath; but was informed, as soon as I arrived in town, that he was not expected to continue many days: and the next day brought us the melancholy news of his death.

My worthy friend and pleasant companion, the Rev. Charles Millard, his chaplain, was with him at Bath, and was witness to many affecting passages which happened toward his latter end. Bad as he was, if Mrs. Horne entered the room, he spoke to her with his usual cheerfulness; although a stupor commonly oppressed him, under which his mind wandered, and his speech was confused: but from what could be understood, his thoughts were always at work upon some heavenly subject. When it was proposed that the holy communion should be administered to him by his chaplain, "By all means," said he, "you cannot do a better thing." In this service he joined with great devotion, and when it was ended, "Now," said he, "I am blessed indeed!"

On the Friday before his death, while his house-keeper was waiting by his bed-side, he asked her, on what day of the week the seventeenth day of the month would fall? She answered, on Tuesday. "Make a note of that," said he, "in a book:" which, to satisfy him, she pretended to do. This proved to be the day on which he died—as quietly as he had lived. From this occurrence, a rumour got abroad, as if he had received some forewarn-

ing of the time of his death. To this I can say nothing; but I can think, without any danger of being mistaken, that if ever there was a man in these latter days, who was worthy to receive from above any unusual testimony due to superior piety, he was that man.

The affliction of his family was much relieved at this time by the friendly and charitable visits of the celebrated Mrs. Hannah More, who was then at Bath, and well knew how much was due to the memory of the departed bishop.

Thus have I brought this good man to his end, through the labours and studies of his life; in all which his example may be attended with some happy effect on those who shall make themselves acquainted with his history.

A
COMMENTARY
ON THE
BOOK OF PSALMS.



AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE Psalms are an epitome of the Bible, adapted to the purposes of devotion. They treat occasionally of the creation and formation of the world; the dispensations of Providence, and the economy of grace; the transactions of the patriarchs; the exodus of the children of Israel; their journey through the wilderness, and settlement in Canaan; their law, priesthood, and ritual; the exploits of their great men, wrought through faith; their sins and captivities; their repenances and restorations; the sufferings and victories of David; the peaceful and happy reign of Solomon; the advent of Messiah, with its effects and consequences; his incarnation, birth, life, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, kingdom, and priesthood; the effusion of the Spirit; the conversion of the nations; the rejection of the Jews; the establishment, increase, and perpetuity of the Christian church; the end of the world; the general judgment; the condemnation of the wicked, and the final triumph of the righteous with their Lord and King. These are the subjects here presented to our meditations. We are instructed how to conceive of them aright, and to express the different affections which, when so

conceived of, they must excite in our minds. They are, for this purpose, adorned with the figures, and set off with all the graces of poetry ; and poetry itself is designed yet farther to be recommended by the charms of music, thus consecrated to the service of God ; that so delight may prepare the way for improvement, and pleasure become the handmaid of wisdom, while every turbulent passion is calmed by sacred melody, and the evil spirit is still dispossessed by the harp of the son of Jesse. This little volume, like the paradise of Eden, affords us in perfection, though in miniature, every thing that groweth elsewhere, ‘ every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food : ’ and above all, what was there lost, but is here restored, **THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN.** That which we read, as matter of speculation, in the other Scriptures, is reduced to practice, when we recite it in the Psalms ; in those, repentance and faith are described, but in these, they are acted ; by a perusal of the former, we learn how others served God, but, by using the latter, we serve him ourselves. “ What is there necessary for man to know,” says the pious and judicious Hooker, “ which the Psalms are not able to teach ? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience,

the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come; all good necessarily to be either known, or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not, in this treasure-house, a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found."¹ In the language of this divine book, therefore, the prayers and praises of the church have been offered up to the throne of grace from age to age. And it appears to have been the manual of the Son of God, in the days of his flesh; who, at the conclusion of his last supper, is generally supposed, and that upon good grounds, to have sung an hymn taken from it;² who pronounced, on the cross, the beginning of the twenty-second Psalm; ' My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ' and expired with a part of the thirty-first Psalm in his mouth; ' Into thy hands I commend my spirit.' Thus He, who had not the Spirit by measure, in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who spake as never man spake, yet chose to conclude his life, to solace himself in his greatest

¹ Hooker's Ecclesiast. Pol. b. v. sect. 37.

² St. Matthew informs us, chap. xxvi. 30, that he and his apostles "sung an hymn;" and the hymn usually sung by the Jews upon that occasion, was, what they called the "great Hallel," consisting of the Psalms from the hundred and thirteenth to the hundred and eighteenth, inclusive.

agony, and at last to breathe out his soul, in the Psalmist's form of words rather than his own. No tongue of man or angel, as Dr. Hammond justly observes, can convey an higher idea of any book, and of their felicity who use it aright.

Proportionably to the excellency of the Psalms, hath been the number of their expositors. The ancients were chiefly taken up in making spiritual or evangelical applications of them; in adapting their discourses on them to the general exigencies of the Christian church, or to the particular necessities of the age in which they wrote. The moderns have set themselves to investigate with diligence, and ascertain with accuracy, their literal scope and meaning. Piety and devotion characterize the writings of the ancients; the commentaries of the moderns display more learning and judgment. The ancients have taught us how to rear a goodly superstructure; but the moderns have laid the surest foundation. To bring them in some measure together, is the design of the following work; in which the author has not laboured to point out what seemed wrong in either, but to extract what he judged to be right from both; to make the annotations of the latter a ground-work for improvements like those of the former; and thus to construct an edifice, solid as well as spacious. Materials, and good ones, he cannot be said to have wanted; so that if the building should give way, the cement must have been faulty, or the workman unskilful.

The right of the Psalter to a place in the sacred

canon hath never been disputed ; and it is often cited by our Lord and the apostles in the New Testament, as the work of the Holy Spirit. Whether David therefore, or any other prophet, was employed as the instrument of communicating to the church such or such a particular Psalm, is a question which if it cannot always be satisfactorily answered, needs not disquiet our minds. When we discern in an epistle, the well-known hand of a friend, we are not solicitous about the pen with which it was written.

The number of Psalms is the same in the original, and in the version of the seventy ; only these last have, by some mistake, thrown the ninth and tenth into one, as also the hundred and fourteenth and the hundred and fifteenth, and have divided the hundred and sixteenth into two, as also the hundred and forty-seventh. The Hebrews have distributed them into five books ; but for what reason, or upon what authority, we know not. This is certain, that the apostles quote from " the book of Psalms,"¹ and that they quote the " second Psalm" of that book, in the order in which it now stands.² That division, which our own church hath made of them, into thirty portions, assigning one to each day of the month, it hath been thought expedient to set down in the margin ; as persons may often choose to turn to the commentary on those Psalms, which occur in their daily course of reading.

¹ Acts. i. 20.

² Acts, xiii. 33.

In the titles, prefixed to some of the Psalms, there is so much obscurity, and in the conjectures which have been made concerning them, both in a literal and spiritual way, so great a variety and uncertainty, that the author finding himself, after all his searches, unable to offer any thing which he thought could content the learned, or edify the unlearned, at length determined to omit them : as the sight of them, unexplained, only distracts the eye and attention of the reader. The omission of the word SELAH must be apologized for in the same manner. The information obtained from the historical titles will be found in the Argument placed at the head of each Psalm ; though even that is not always to be relied on.

Where this information failed, the occasion and drift of a Psalm were to be collected from the internal evidence contained in itself, by a diligent perusal of it, with a view to the sacred history ; the light of which, when held to the Psalms, often dissipates the darkness that must otherwise for ever envelop allusions to particular events and circumstances. Sometimes, indeed, the descriptions are couched in terms more general ; and then the want of such information is less perceived. If it appear, for instance, that David, at the time of composing any Psalm, was under persecution, or had been lately delivered from it, it may not be of any great consequence, if we cannot determine with precision, whether his persecution by Saul and Doeg, or that by Absolom and Ahithophel, be intended

and referred to. The expressions either of his sorrow or his joy, his strains, whether plaintive or jubilant, may be nearly the same, in both cases, respectively. This observation may be extended to many other instances of calamities bewailed, or deliverances celebrated, in the Psalms, sometimes by the prince, sometimes by the community, and frequently by both together. Upon the whole, it is hoped, that the design of each Psalm hath been sufficiently discovered, to explain and apply it, for the instruction and comfort of believers.

The result of such critical inquiries as were found necessary to be made, is given in as few words as possible; often only by inserting into a verse, or subjoining to it, that sense of a word, or phrase, which seemed upon mature deliberation to be the best; as it was deemed improper to clog with prolix disquisitions of this kind, a work intended for general use. The reader will, however, reap the benefit of many such, which have been carefully consulted for him. And he will not, it is presumed, have reason to complain, that any verse is passed over without a tolerable consistent interpretation, and some useful improvement. Where the literal sense was plain, it is noticed only so far as was necessary to make an application, or form a reflection. Where there appeared any obscurity or difficulty, recourse was had to the best critics, and that solution which seemed the most satisfactory, given in the concicest manner. Much labour hath here been bestowed, where little appears. The plan

of every Psalm hath been attentively studied, with the connexion and dependence of its parts, which it is the design of the Argument to exhibit at one view, and of the Commentary to pursue and explain from beginning to end.¹

No person is more thoroughly sensible than the author is, of the respect and gratitude due from all lovers of the sacred writings, to those who have laboured in the field of literal criticism: great and illustrious characters, whose names will be had by the church in everlasting remembrance; all who desire to understand the Scriptures must enter into their labours, and make the proper advantage of them, as he himself hath endeavoured to do. But let us also bear in mind, that all is not done when this is done. A work of the utmost importance still remains, which it is the business of Theology² to undertake and execute; since, with respect to the Old Testament, and the Psalter more especially, a person may attain a critical and grammatical knowledge of them, and yet continue a Jew with a veil upon his heart; an utter stranger to that sense of the holy books, evidently intended, in such a variety of instances, to bear a testimony to the Saviour of the world; that sense, which is styled by divines,

¹ Nos Lectoris pium hunc laborem adjuvandum suscepimus: dum constitutis argumentis scopum attentioni figimus: dum scrutarum literam, et ex sacrâ historiâ, quantum possumus, omnia repetimus; dum annotamus quæ pietatem inflammat; alia eo exemplo querenda indicamus.—Bossuet. Dissertat. in Psal. cap. vii.

² Theologiae insignis hic usus est, ut, verborum sensu exposito, REM intelligas.—Elsner. Præfat. ad Observat. Sacr.

the PROPHETICAL, EVANGELICAL, MYSTICAL, or SPIRITUAL sense. As it is one great design of the following work to investigate that sense in many of the Psalms, this is the proper place to lay before the reader those grounds and reasons upon which such investigation has been made.

That the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture, like all other good things, is liable to abuse, and that it hath been actually abused, both in ancient and modern days, cannot be denied. He who shall go about to apply in this way, any passage before he hath attained its literal meaning, may say what in itself is pious and true, but foreign to the text from which he endeavoureth to deduce it. St. Jerome, it is well known, when grown older and wiser, lamented, that, in the fervours of a youthful fancy, he had spiritualized the prophecy of Obadiah before he understood it. And it must be allowed that a due attention to the occasion and scope of the Psalms, would have pared off many unseemly excrescences, which now deform the commentaries of St. Augustin, and other Fathers, upon them. But these, and other concessions of the same kind, being made, as they are made very freely, "men of sense will consider, that a principle is not therefore to be rejected, because it has been abused;"¹ since human errors can never invalidate the truths of God.

It may not be amiss, therefore, to run through

¹ Bishop Hurd's Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies, p. 64.

the Psalter, and point out some of the more remarkable passages, which are cited from thence by our Lord and his apostles, and applied to matters evangelical.

No sooner have we opened the book, than the second Psalm presenteth itself, to all appearance, as an inauguration hymn, composed by David, the anointed of Jehovah, when by him crowned with victory, and placed triumphant on the sacred hill of Sion. But let us turn to Acts, iv. 25, and there we find the apostles, with one voice, declaring the Psalm to be descriptive of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, and of the opposition raised against his Gospel, both by Jew and Gentile.

In the eighth Psalm we imagine the writer to be setting forth the pre-eminence of man in general, above the rest of the creation ; but by Heb. ii. 6, we are informed, that the supremacy conferred on the second Adam, the man Christ Jesus, over all things in heaven and earth, is the subject there treated of.

St. Peter stands up, Acts, ii. 25, and preaches the resurrection of Jesus from the latter part of the sixteenth Psalm ; and, lo ! three thousand souls are converted by the sermon.

Of the eighteenth Psalm we are told, in the course of the sacred history, 2 Sam. xxii. that 'David spake before the Lord the words of that song, in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul.' Yet in Rom. xv. 9, the 49th verse of that

Psalm is adduced as a proof, that 'the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy in Jesus Christ, as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.'

In the nineteenth Psalm, David seems to be speaking of the material heavens, and their operations only, when he says, 'their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.' But St. Paul, Rom. x. 18, quotes the passage to show, that the Gospel had been universally published by the apostles.

The twenty-second Psalm Christ appropriated to himself, by beginning it in the midst of his sufferings on the cross: 'My God, my God,' &c. Three other verses of it are, in the New Testament, applied to him; and the words of the 8th verse were actually used by the chief priests, when they reviled him; 'He trusted in God,' &c. Matt. xxvii. 43.

When David saith, in the fortieth Psalm, 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire—Lo, I come to do thy will;' we might suppose him only to declare in his own person, that obedience is better than sacrifice. But from Heb. x. 5, we learn, that Messiah, in that place, speaketh of his advent in the flesh, to abolish the legal sacrifices, and to do away sin, by the oblation of himself once for all.

That tender and pathetic complaint, in the forty-first Psalm, 'Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me,' undoubtedly might be, and probably was, originally uttered by David, upon the

revolt of his old friend and counsellor, Ahithophel, to the party of his rebellious son, Absalom. But we are certain, from John, xiii. 18, that this Scripture was fulfilled, when Christ was betrayed by his apostate disciple—‘ I speak not of you all ; I know whom I have chosen ; but that the Scriptures may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lift up his heel against me.’

The forty-fourth Psalm we must suppose to have been written on occasion of a persecution under which the church at that time laboured ; but a verse of it is cited, Rom. viii. 36, as expressive of what Christians were to suffer on their blessed Master’s account ; ‘ as it is written, For thy sake are we killed all the day long ; we are counted as sheep appointed to be slain.’

A quotation from the forty-fifth Psalm, in Heb. i. 8, certifies us, that the whole is addressed to the Son of God, and therefore celebrates his spiritual union with the church, and the happy fruits of it.

The sixty-eighth Psalm, though apparently conversant about Israelitish victories, the translation of the ark to Sion, and the services of the tabernacle, yet does, under those figures, treat of Christ’s resurrection, his going up on high, leading captivity captive, pouring out the gifts of the Spirit, erecting his church in the world, and enlarging it by the accession of the nations to the faith ; as will be evident to any one, who considers the force and consequence of the apostle’s citation from it, Ephes. iv. 7, 8. ‘ Unto every one of us is given grace,

according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.'

The sixty-ninth Psalm is five times referred to in the Gospels, as being uttered by the prophet, in the person of Messiah. The imprecations, or rather predictions, at the latter end of it, are applied, Rom. xi. 9, 10, to the Jews; and to Judas, Acts, i. 20, where the hundred and ninth Psalm is also cited, as prophetical of the sore judgments which should beset that arch-traitor, and the wretched nation of which he was an epitome.

St. Matthew informing us, chap. xiii. 34, that Jesus spake to the multitude in parables, gives it as one reason why he did so, 'that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,' Psalm. lxxviii. 2, 'I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.'

The ninety-first Psalm was applied, by the tempter, to Messiah; nor did our Lord object to the application, but only to the false inference, which his adversary suggested from it. Matt. iv. 6, 7.

The ninety-fifth Psalm is explained at large in Heb. iii. and iv. as relative to the state and trial of Christians in the world, and to their attainment of the heavenly rest.

The hundred and tenth Psalm is cited by Christ himself, Matt. xxii. 44, as treating of his exaltation, kingdom, and priesthood.

The hundred and seventeenth Psalm, consisting only of two verses, is employed, Rom. xv. 11, to prove that the Gentiles were one day to praise God for the mercies of redemption.

The twenty-second verse of the hundred and eighteenth Psalm, ‘The stone which the builders refused,’ &c. is quoted six different times, as spoken of our Saviour.

And, lastly, ‘the fruit of David’s body,’ which God is said, in the hundred and thirty-second Psalm to have promised that he would place upon his ‘throne,’ is asserted, Acts, ii. 30; to be Jesus Christ.

These citations, lying dispersed through the Scriptures of the New Testament, are often suffered by common readers to pass unnoticed. And many others content themselves with saying, that they are made in a sense of accommodation, as passages may be quoted from poems of histories merely human, for the illustration of truths, of which their authors never thought. “And this,” as a learned critic observes, “is no fault, but rather a beauty in writing. A passage applied justly, and in a new sense, is ever pleasing to an ingenious reader, who loves to be agreeably surprised, and to see a likeness and pertinency where he expected none. He has that surprise, which the Latin poet so poetically gives to the tree ;

“ *Miraturque novas frondes, et non sua poma.*”

The readers, who have been accustomed to con-

sider the New Testament citations in this view of accommodation only, must perceive the necessity of such accommodation, at least, to adapt the use of the Psalms, as a part of divine service, to the times and circumstances of the Gospel; and cannot therefore reasonably object, upon their own principles, to the applications made in the following sheets for that purpose. But not to enquire, at present, whether passages are not sometimes cited in this manner, surely no one can attentively review the above-made collection of New Testament citations from the book of Psalms, as they have been placed together before him, without perceiving that the Psalms are written upon a divine, preconcerted, prophetical plan, and contain much more than, at first sight, they appear to do. They are beautiful without, but all-glorious within, like 'apples of gold in pictures, or net-work cases of silver;' Prov. xxv. 11. The brightness of the casket attracts our attention, till, through it, upon a nearer approach, we discover its contents. And then, indeed, it may be said to have 'no glory, by reason of the glory that so far excelleth.'¹ Very delightful and profitable they are, in their literal and historical sense, which well repayeth all the pains taken to come at it. But that once obtained, a farther scene begins to open upon us, and all the blessings of the Gospel present themselves to the eye of faith. So that the expositor is a traveller ascending an eminence, neither unfruitful, nor unplea-

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 10.

sant; at the top of which when he is arrived, he beholds, like Moses from the summit of mount Nebo, a more lovely and extensive prospect lying beyond it, and stretching away to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. He sees valleys covered over with corn, blooming gardens, and verdant meadows, with flocks and herds feeding by rivers of water; till, ravished with the sight, he cries out, as Peter did at the view of his Master's glory, ' It is good to be here !'

It would be unreasonable to suppose that no parts of the Psalms may by us be spiritually applied, but such as are already expressly applied for us by the inspired writers. Let any man consider attentively a New Testament citation; then let him as carefully read over, with a view to it, the Psalm from which it is taken, and see if it will not serve him as a key, wherewith to unlock the treasures of eternal wisdom; if it will not ' open his eyes,' and show him ' wonderful things' in God's laws. When we are taught to consider one verse of a Psalm as spoken by Messiah, and there is no change of person, what can we conclude, but that he is the speaker through the whole? In that case, the Psalm becomes at once as much transfigured as the blessed Person, supposed to be the subject of it, was on mount Tabor. And if Messiah be the speaker of one Psalm, what should hinder, but that another Psalm, where the same kind of scene is evidently described, and the same expressions are used, may be expounded in the same manner?

It is very justly observed by Dr. Allix, that "although the sense of near fifty Psalms be fixed and settled by divine authors, yet Christ and his apostles did not undertake to quote all the Psalms they could quote, but only to give a key to their hearers, by which they might apply to the same subjects the Psalms of the same composure and expression."¹ The citations in the New Testament were made incidentally, and as occasion was given. But can we imagine, that the church was not farther instructed in the manner of applying the Psalms to her Redeemer and to herself? Did she stop at the applications thus incidentally and occasionally made by the inspired writers? Did she stop, because they had directed her how to proceed? We know she did not. The primitive fathers, it is true, for want of critical learning, and particularly a competent knowledge of the original Hebrew, often wandered in their expositions; but they are unexceptionable witnesses to us of this matter of fact, that such a method of expounding the Psalms, built upon the practice of the apostles in their writings and preachings, did universally prevail in the church from the beginning. They who have ever looked into St. Augustin know that he pursues this plan invariably, treating of the Psalms as proceeding from the mouth of Christ, or of the church, or of both, considered as one mystical person. The same is true of Jerome, Ambrose, Arnobius, Cassi-

Preface to his Book of Psalms, p. 9.

odore, Hilary, and Prosper. Chrysostom studies to make the Psalter useful to believers under the Gospel. Theodoret attends both to the literal and prophetical sense. But what is very observable Tertullian, who flourished at the beginning of the third century, mentions it as if it were then an allowed point in the church, that "almost all the Psalms are spoken in the person of Christ, being addressed by the Son to the Father; that is, by Christ to God."¹ In this channel flows the stream of the earliest Christian expositors. Nor did they depart, in this point, from the doctrine held in the church of the ancient Jews, who were always taught to regard Messiah as the capital object of the Psalter. And though, when the time came, that people would not receive Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, it does not appear that they ever objected to the propriety of the citations made by our Lord and his apostles, or thought such passages applicable to David only and his concerns. Nay, the most learned of their Rabbis, who have written since the commencement of the Christian era, still agree with us in referring many of the Psalms to Messiah and his kingdom; differing only about the person of the one, and the nature of the other.

When learning arose, as it were, from the dead, in the sixteenth century, and the study of primitive theology by that means revived, the spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures revived with it. It was

¹ Omnes penè Psalmi Christi personam sustinent. — Filium ad Patrem, id est Christum ad Deum verba facientem representant.

adopted at that time, by one admirably qualified to do it justice, and to recommend it again to the world by every charm of genius, and every ornament of language. I mean the accomplished Erasmus, who omitteth no opportunity of insisting on the usefulness and even the necessity of it, for the right understanding of the Scriptures ; for the attainment of that wisdom which they teach, and that holiness which they prescribe ; seeming to think himself never better employed, than when he is removing the earth and rubbish with which those Philistines, the monks, had stopped up the wells of salvation, opened by the apostles and first fathers of the church, for the benefit of mankind.¹ This great man was much importuned by his learned friends, as he informeth us in an epistle to cardinal Sadolet, to write a commentary on the Psalms.² Such a work, executed by him, had been one of the richest gifts that were ever cast into the Christian treasury ; as we may judge from the specimen which he hath left us, in his discourses on eleven of them. Some of these were drawn up with a view to enlarge upon the transactions of the times ; and in all of them he is more diffuse and luxuriant

¹ Enchirid. Mil. Christ. in *Præfat. Canon.* 5, et passim.

² Lib. xxv. Epist. 11. edit. Froben. 1085, edit. Cler. Non temel rogatus sum, quum ab aliis, tum ab Anglorum rege, ut in omnes Psalmos ederem Commentarios ; sed deterrebant me quum alia multa, tum illa duo potissimum ; quod viderem hoc argumentum vix posse pro dignitate tractari, nisi quis calleat Hebreorum literas, atque etiam antiquitates ; partim quod verebar ne turbâ Commentariorum obscuraretur Sermo Propheticus, citius quam illustraretur.

than, it is to be presumed, he would have been in a general exposition. But they abound with a rich variety of sacred learning, communicated in a manner ever pleasing and ever instructive. If at any time he takes us out of the road, it is to show us a fine country, and we are still in company with Erasmus. He considers a Psalm, as it may relate to Christ, either suffering or triumphant; as it may concern the church, whether consisting of Jews or Gentiles, whether in adversity or prosperity, through the several stages and periods of its existence; and as it may be applicable to the different states and circumstances of individuals, during the trials and temptations which they meet with, in the course of their Christian pilgrimage and warfare here below, till, having overcome their last enemy, they shall sit down with their Lord in his kingdom; when the scheme of prophecy shall receive its final accomplishment, and 'the mystery of God be finished.'¹

It is obvious, that every part of the Psalter when explicated according to this Scriptural and primitive method, is rendered universally 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;' and the propriety immediately appears of its having always been used in the devotional way, both by the Jewish and the Christian church. With regard to the Jews, Bishop Chandler very pertinently remarks, that "they must have understood David, their prince, to have been a

¹ Rev. x. 7.

figure of Messiah. They would not otherwise have made his Psalms part of their daily worship ; nor would David have delivered them to the church to be so employed, were it not to instruct and support them in the knowledge and belief of this fundamental article. Was the Messias not concerned in the Psalms, it were absurd to celebrate, twice a-day, in their public devotions, the events of one man's life, who was deceased so long ago as to have no relation now to the Jews, and the circumstances of their affairs ; or to transcribe whole passages from them, into their prayers, for the coming of the Messiah."¹ Upon the same principle, it is easily seen, that the objections which may seem to lie against the use of Jewish services in Christian congregations, cease at once. Thus, it may be said, Are we concerned with the affairs of David and of Israel ? Have we any thing to do with the ark and the temple ? They are no more. Are we to go up to Jerusalem, and to worship on Sion ? They are desolated, and trodden under foot by the Turks. Are we to sacrifice young bullocks, according to the law ? The law is abolished, never to be observed again. Do we pray for victory over Moab, Edom, and Philistia ; or for deliverance from Babylon ? There are no such nations, no such places in the world. What then do we mean, when, taking such expressions into our mouths, we utter them in our own persons, as parts of our devotions, before God ? Assuredly we must mean a

¹ Defence of Christianity, Part First, p. 241.

spiritual Jerusalem and Sion ; a spiritual ark and temple ; a spiritual law ; spiritual sacrifices ; and spiritual victories over spiritual enemies ; all described under the old names, which are still retained, though ‘old things are passed away, and all things are become new.’¹ By substituting Messiah for David, the Gospel for the law, the church Christian for that of Israel, and the enemies of the one for those of the other, the Psalms are made our own. Nay, they are, with more fulness and propriety, applied now to the substance, than they were of old to the ‘shadow of good things then to come.’² And, therefore, ever since the commencement of the Christian era, the church hath chosen to celebrate the Gospel mysteries in the words of these ancient hymns, rather than to compose for that purpose new ones of her own. For, let it not pass unobserved that, when, upon the first publication of the Gospel, the apostles had occasion to utter their transports of joy, on their being counted worthy to suffer for the name of their dear Lord and Master, which was then opposed by Jew and Gentile, they brake forth into an application of the second Psalm to the transactions

¹ 2 Cor v. 17. Ergo arrige aures, Christiane Lector, et ubi talia in Davide legeris, tu mihi fac cogitas, non Arcam, fragile lignum, aut Tabernaculum cinctum pellibus; non urbem lapidibus compositam; non Templum divinæ Majestati angustum: sed Christi et Ecclesiæ Sacraenta, sed vivos lapides, Christo angulari lapidi coaptatos; sed ipsam Eucharistiam presentis Dei testem; denique caeleste regnum et æternam felicitatem.—Bossuet, Dissertat. de Psal. cap. i. ad fin.

² Heb. x. 1.

then before their eyes: see Acts, iv. 25. The primitive Christians constantly followed this method, in their devotions; and particularly when, delivered out of the hands of persecuting tyrants by the victories of Constantine, they praised God for his goodness, and the glorious success and establishment of Christ's religion, no words were found so exquisitely adapted to the purpose, as those of David, in the ninety-sixth, ninety-eighth, and other Psalms:—‘ Sing unto the Lord a new song : sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, and praise his name: be telling of his salvation from day to day. Declare his honour unto the heathen, his worship unto all people,’ &c. &c. &c. In these, and the like Psalms, we continue to praise God, for all his spiritual mercies in Christ, to this day.

The Psalms, thus applied, have advantages which no fresh compositions, however finely executed, can possibly have; since besides their incomparable fitness to express our sentiments, they are, at the same time, memorials of, and appeals to, former mercies and deliverances; they are acknowledgments of prophecies accomplished; they point the connexion between the old and new dispensations, thereby teaching us to admire and adore the wisdom of God displayed in both, and furnishing, while we read or sing them, an inexhaustible variety of the noblest matter that can engage the contemplations of man.

Why is the mind more than ordinarily affected,

and either melted into sorrow, or transported with joy, when, on the days set apart for the commemoration of our Saviour's birth, passion, resurrection, &c. the Proper Psalms are read which the church hath appointed, following herein the directions of evangelists and apostles, and the usage of the early ages? Why, but because, by such appointment, we are necessarily put upon transferring our ideas from the complaints or exultations of David and Israel, to those of a suffering or glorified Messiah, of whose sufferings or glories we participate, as members of his mystical body? And how much more intense would be the effect, if, in the sermons preached on those occasions, such Proper Psalms were expounded to the people, and their propriety evinced, as it might easily be! Discourses of this kind would make the hearts of the auditors to 'burn within them;' and men would cease to wonder, that three thousand Jews were converted to the faith by St. Peter's animated discourse on part of the sixteenth Psalm. Were believers once brought well acquainted with these Proper Psalms, they would be better enabled to study and apply the rest, which might likewise be explained to them, at different times, and certainly afford the finest subjects on which a Christian orator can apply his eloquence. That this was done in the primitive church, we learn from the exposition of the Psalms left us by St. Chrysostom in the east, and St. Augustin in the west, those expositions still subsisting in the form of homilies, as delivered

to their respective congregations. Is it not to be feared that, for want of such instructions, the repetition of the Psalms, as performed by multitudes, is but one degree above mechanism? And is it not a melancholy reflection to be made, at the close of a long life, that, after reciting them, at proper seasons, through the greatest part of it, no more should be known of their true meaning and application, than when the Psalter was first taken in hand at school?

Many sensible and well-disposed persons, therefore, who, when they read or sing the Psalms, desire to read and to sing 'with the spirit and the understanding,' have long called for a commentary which might enable them to do so, which might not only explain the literal sense of these divine compositions, and show how they may be accommodated to our temporal affairs, as members of civil society;¹ but might also unfold the mysteries of the kingdom of God, which are involved in them, and teach their application to us, as members of that spiritual and heavenly society of which Christ Jesus is the head, and for whose use, in

¹ A concern for the present peace and prosperity of the world, and of that kingdom in it to which we belong, ought ever to be entertained and cherished by the most exalted Christian. And if this part of the subject should, at any time, in the following work, appear to be but slightly touched upon, the reason is, because it lies obvious upon the surface, and has been so frequently inculcated by other expositors. Nor are mankind, indeed, so liable to forget the relation they bear to the world, as they are to overlook that which subsists between them and their Creator and Redeemer.

every age, they were intended by their omniscient Author. A work of this kind, though often desired, has never yet been executed, upon any regular and consistent plan. The survey of a province in theology, hitherto almost unoccupied among the moderns, which promised a great deal of pleasing as well as profitable employment, gave birth to the attempt which hath been made to cultivate it, in the ensuing Commentary; in which the author has only endeavoured to evince, by an induction of particulars, the truth of what so many learned and good men have asserted in general, concerning the prophetical, or evangelical, import of the Psalter. Dr. Hammond, in the preface to his Annotations, tells us, he chose to leave every man to make applications of this kind for himself, finding he had work enough upon his hands in the literal way. But so much having been done by him, and other able critics, in that way, it seems to be now time that something should be done in the other, and some directions given, in a case where directions cannot but be greatly wanted.

Very few of the Psalms comparatively, appear to be simply prophetical, and to belong only to Messiah, without the intervention of any other person. Most of them, it is apprehended, have a double sense, which stands upon this ground and foundation, that the ancient patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings were typical characters, in their several offices, and in the more remarkable passages of their lives, their extraordinary depressions,

and miraculous exaltations, foreshowing Him who was to arise, as the Head of the holy family, the great Prophet, the true Priest, the everlasting King. The Israelitish polity and the law of Moses were purposely framed after the example and shadow of things spiritual and heavenly; and the events which happened to the ancient people of God, were designed to shadow out parallel occurrences, which should afterwards take place, in the accomplishment of man's redemption, and the rise and progress of the Christian church. For this reason, the Psalms composed for the use of Israel, and Israel's monarch, and by them accordingly used at the time, do admit of an application to us, who are now 'the Israel of God,'¹ and to our Redeemer, who is the King of this Israel.²

Nor will this seem strange to us, if we reflect, that the same divine Person, who inspired the Psalms, did also foreknow and predispose all the events of which he intended them to treat. And hence it is evident, that the spiritual sense is, and must be, peculiar to the Scriptures; because of those persons and transactions only, which are there mentioned and recorded, can it be affirmed for certain, that they were designed to be figurative. And should any one attempt to apply the narrative of

¹ Gal. vi. 16.

² That expressions and descriptions in human writings are often so framed as to admit of a double sense, without any impropriety or confusion, is shown by the very learned Mr. Merrick, in his excellent Observations on Dr. Benson's Essay concerning the Unity of Sense, &c. subjoined to his Annotations on the Psalms.

Alexander's expedition by Quintus Curtius, or the Commentaries of Cæsar, as the New Testament writers have done, and taught us to do, the histories of the Old, he would find himself unable to proceed three steps with consistency and propriety. The argument, therefore, which would infer the absurdity of supposing the Scriptures to have a spiritual sense, from the acknowledged absurdity of supposing histories or poems merely human to have it, is inconclusive ; the sacred writings differing in this respect, from all other writings in the world, as much as the nature of the transactions which they relate differs from that of all other transactions, and the author who relates them differs from all other authors.

“ This double, or secondary, sense of prophecy, was so far from giving offence to Lord Bacon, that he speaks of it with admiration, as one striking argument of its divinity. ‘ In sorting the prophecies of Scripture with their events, we must allow’ (says he) ‘ for that latitude, which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies, being of the nature of the Author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day; and therefore they are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment through many ages, though the height, or fulness of them, may refer to some one age.’

“ But that we may not mistake, or pervert, this fine observation of our great philosopher, it may be proper to take notice, that the reason of it holds in such prophecies only as respect the several suc-

cessive parts of one system; which being intimately connected together, may be supposed to come within the view and contemplation of the same prophecy; whereas it would be endless and one sees not on what grounds of reason we are authorized, to look out for the accomplishment of prophecy, in any casual unrelated events of general history. The Scripture speaks of prophecy, as respecting Jesus, that is, as being one connected scheme of Providence, of which the Jewish dispensation makes a part; so that here we are led to expect that 'springing and germinant accomplishment,' which is mentioned. But had the Jewish law been complete in itself, and totally unrelated to the Christian, the general principle—'that a thousand years are with God but as one day'—would no more justify us in extending a Jewish prophecy to Christian events, because perhaps it was eminently fulfilled in them, than it would justify us in extending it to any other signally corresponding events whatsoever. It is only when the prophet hath one uniform connected design before him, that we are authorized to use this latitude of interpretation. For then the prophetic spirit naturally runs along the several parts of *such* design, and unites the remotest events with the nearest: the style of the prophet, in the meantime, so adapting itself to this double prospect, as to paint the near and subordinate event in terms that *emphatically* represent the distant and more considerable. So that, with this explanation, nothing can be more

just or philosophical, than the idea which Lord Bacon suggests of divine prophecy.

"The great scheme of redemption, we are now considering, being the only scheme in the plan of Providence, which, as far as we know, hath been prepared and dignified by a continued system of prophecy, at least this being the only scheme to which we have seen a prophetic system applied, men do not so readily apprehend the doctrine of *double senses* in prophecy, as they would do if they saw it exemplified in other cases. But what the history of mankind does not supply, we may represent to ourselves by many obvious suppositions; which cannot justify, indeed, such a scheme of things, but may facilitate the conception of it."¹

In allegories framed by man, the ground-work is generally fiction,² because of the difficulty of finding one true series of facts, which shall exactly represent another. But the great Disposer of events, 'known unto whom are all his works,' from the beginning to the end of time, was able to effect this; and the Scripture allegories are therefore equally true in the letter and in the spirit of them. The

¹ Bishop Hurd's excellent Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies. Serm. iii.

² I say, "generally," since, as the above cited Mr. Merrick justly observes, "It is possible (for example) in a complimentary address to a modern statesman, or general, to relate the actions of some ancient patriot of the same character, in such a manner, that the parallel intended to be drawn between them, shall be readily known, and the praises expressly bestowed on the one, be transferred, by the reader's own application to the other."

events signifying, no less than those signified, really happened as they are said to have done.¹ Why the allegories of this most perfect form, with which the book of God abounds, and which are all pregnant with truths of the highest import, should be treated with neglect and contempt, while the imperfect allegories of man's devising are universally sought after and admired, as the most pleasing and efficacious method of conveying instruction, it is not easy to say. Why should it not afford a believer as much delight, to contemplate the lineaments of his Saviour, portrayed in one of the patriarchs, as to be informed, that the character of Iapis was designed by Virgil to adumbrate that of Antonius Musa, physician to Augustus? Or why should not a discourse upon the redemption of the church, as foreshadowed by the exodus of Israel, have as many admirers among Christians, as a dissertation, however ingeniously composed, on the descent of *Æneas* to the infernal regions, considered as typical of an initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries?

A learned, judicious, and most elegant writer of the present age, hath stated and illustrated the subject we are now upon, with a felicity of thought and expression peculiar to himself. I shall endeavour to gratify the English reader with a view of

¹ Neque propterea ab historico, sive literali atque immediato, ut aiunt, sensu aberrare nos oportet; quin eo erit clarior et fundatior secretioris illius intelligentiae sensus, quo typum ipsum, hoc est, historiam ac literam figemus certius.—Bossuet. Dissert. in Psal. ad finem.

his sentiments. The beauties of his language are not to be translated?

" It would be an arduous and adventurous undertaking to attempt to lay down the rules observed in the conduct of the Mystic Allegory; so diverse are the modes in which the Holy Spirit has thought proper to communicate his counsels to different persons, upon different occasions; inspiring and directing the minds of the prophets according to his good pleasure; at one time vouchsafing more full and free discoveries of future events; while, at another, he is more obscure and sparing in his intimations. From hence, of course, ariseth a great variety in the Scripture usage of this kind of allegory, as to the manner in which the spiritual sense is couched under the other. Sometimes it can hardly break forth and show itself at intervals through the literal, which meets the eye as the ruling sense, and seems to have taken entire possession of the words and phrases. On the contrary, it is much oftener the capital figure in the piece, and stands confessed at once by such splendour of language, that the letter, in its turn, is thrown into shade, and almost totally disappears. Sometimes it shines with a constant equable light; and sometimes it darts upon us on a sudden, like a flash of lightning from the clouds. But a composition is never more truly elegant and beautiful, than when the two senses, alike conspicuous, run parallel together through the whole poem, mutually corresponding with, and illustrating each other. I will

produce an undoubted instance or two of this kind, which will show my meaning, and confirm what has hitherto been advanced on this subject of the mystic allegory.

"The establishment of David upon his throne, notwithstanding the opposition made to it by his enemies, is the subject of the second Psalm. David sustains in it a twofold character, literal and allegorical. If we read over the Psalm, first with an eye to the literal David, the meaning is obvious, and put out of all dispute by the sacred history. There is indeed an uncommon glow in the expression, and sublimity in the figures, and the diction is now and then exaggerated, as it were on purpose to intimate, and lead us to, the contemplation of higher and more important matters concealed within. In compliance with this admonition, if we take another survey of the Psalm, as relative to the person and concerns of the spiritual David, a nobler series of events instantly rises to view, and the meaning becomes more evident, as well as exalted. The colouring, which may perhaps seem too bold and glaring for the king of Israel, will no longer appear so, when laid upon his great antitype. After we have thus attentively considered the subjects apart, let us look at them together, and we shall behold the full beauty and majesty of this most charming poem. We shall perceive the two senses, very distinct from each other, yet conspiring in perfect harmony, and bearing a wonderful resemblance in every feature and lineament, while

the analogy between them is so exactly preserved, that either may pass for the original from whence the other was copied. New light is continually cast upon the phraseology, fresh weight and dignity are added to the sentiment, till gradually ascending from things below to things above, from human affairs to those which are divine, they bear the great important theme upwards with them, and at length place it in the height and brightness of heaven.

" What hath been observed with regard to this Psalm, may also be applied to the seventy-second ; the subject of which is of the same kind, and treated in the same manner. Its title might be *The Inauguration of Solomon*. The scheme of the allegory is alike in both ; but a diversity of matter occasions an alteration in the diction. For whereas one is employed in celebrating the magnificent triumphs of victory, it is the design of the other to draw a pleasing picture of peace, and of that felicity which is her inseparable attendant. The style is, therefore of a more even and temperate sort, and more richly ornamented. It aboundeth not with those sudden changes of the person speaking, which dazzle and astonish ; but the imagery is borrowed from the delightful scenes with which creation cheers the sight, and the pencil of the divine artist is dipped in the softer colours of nature. And here we may take notice how peculiarly adapted to the genius of this kind of allegory the parabolical style is, on account of that great variety of na-

tural images to be found in it. For as these images are capable of being employed in the illustration of things divine and human, between which there is a certain analogy maintained, so they easily afford that ambiguity which is necessary in this species of composition, where the language is applicable to each sense, and obscure in neither; it comprehends both parts of the allegory, and may be clearly and distinctly referred to one or the other.”¹

The scheme of exposition so beautifully delineated and illustrated in two instances by this truly valuable author, has been extended, in theory, by another learned writer, to a great part of the Psalter; and that upon a principle deduced from the attributes of God, and the nature and design of the divine dispensations; though his own labours, like those of Dr. Hammond, were employed chiefly in literal criticism. His reasoning is as follows:—

“ In this point (namely, the application of the Psalms to the mysteries of the Gospel) I am very clear. The Jews only, as a nation, acknowledged the one supreme God, under the name of Jehovah; they must be, therefore, his peculiar people. There is nothing capricious in this; they are correlates, and of necessity answer reciprocally to each other. Hence that singular intercourse between God and them. Hence, among other instances of his favour, his communication of himself to them by superna-

¹ Bishop Lowth on the Hebrew Poetry, Lect. xi.

tural ways of oracle, inspiration, &c. When the acknowledgment of the one God branched itself from this Jewish stock, over the face of the earth, and by that means he was become the God of all mankind, they must all, for the same reason, become his people. As God is ever the same, and his doings uniform, his conduct towards mankind must exactly be proportioned to his conduct towards the Jewish nation. Let us, therefore, place God in common over them both ; and there will be—on one side, the Jewish nation ; and on the other, mankind : on one side, Canaan, and a national prosperity ; on the other, heaven and human happiness : on one side, a redemption from Egyptian servitude, and national evils ; on the other, a redemption of the whole human race from absolute evil : on one side, national crimes atoned by national ceremonies, sacrifices, priests ; on the other, sins expiated by the one universal sacrifice of Jesus Christ : on one side, national and temporary saviours, kings, prophets, &c. ; on the other, all this universal and eternal : on one side, the law, and every branch of it, adapted to a favourite nation ; on the other, the everlasting Gospel, suited to all mankind. It is impossible, therefore, that God can say any thing to David, under the quality of king of this chosen nation, which he does not speak, at the same time, to Jesus Christ, as King of all the elect, and that in a truer and nobler sense. To each of them he speaks in a sense adapted to the nature of their respective kingdoms. Nor is the

latter a bare accommodation of words, but the first and highest meaning of them, and which only, absolutely speaking, can be the true sense of God ; the other being this sense, confined to a particular circumstance ; in other words, an absolute truth, made history and matter of fact. This is a principle, which shows, that, far from denying the Christian application, I consider the literal and historical sense only as a kind of vehicle for it."¹

Upon this plan it is, that many of the Psalms are interpreted in the following sheets.

In such of them as were written by David, and treat of his affairs, that extraordinary person is considered as an illustrious representative of Messiah, who is more than once foretold under the name of David, and to whom are applied, in the New Testament, Psalms which do undoubtedly, in the letter of them, relate to David, and were composed on occasion of particular occurrences which befel him ; a circumstance in theology to be accounted for upon no other principle.

When, therefore, he describeth himself as one hated and persecuted without a cause ; as one accused of crimes which he never committed, and suffering for sins the very thoughts of which he abhorred ; as one whose life was embittered by affliction, and his soul overwhelmed with sorrows ; yet, withal, as one whom no troubles could induce to renounce his trust and confidence in the pro-

¹ Preface to an Essay toward a New English Version of the Book of Psalms, by the Reverend Mr. Mudge.

mises of God concerning him ; when he repeated his resolutions of adhering to the divine law, setting forth its various excellencies, and the comforts which it afforded him in the days of adversity ; when he complaineth of that implacable malice, and unrelenting fury, with which he was pursued by Saul and his attendants, by Doeg the Edomite, by rebellious Absalom, traitorous Ahithophel, &c. and when, contrary to all appearances, he predicteth their destruction, with his own final exaltation ; in expounding the Psalms of this cast and complexion, it hath been my endeavour to direct the reader's thoughts to parallel circumstances, which present themselves in the history of the true David ; his sorrows and sufferings ; his resignation under them all ; his obedience to the will of his Father ; the temper and behaviour of his betrayers and murderers ; the prophecies of judgments to be inflicted upon them, and of glory to be conferred upon him. As the Psalter was the liturgy of the Jewish church, of which our Lord was a member, and to which he therefore entirely conformed during his abode and humiliation upon earth, he might pour forth his complaints, and 'offer up his prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears,'¹ in the very words which his progenitor David had before used under his own troubles, but which were given by inspiration, with a view to the case of that blessed Person whom in those troubles, he had the honour to prefigure.

¹ Heb. v. 7.

Other Psalms there are, which disclose far different scenes. In them the sorrows of David are at an end, and the day of his deliverance hath already dawned. The heavens are opened, and Jehovah appeareth in the cause of his afflicted servant. He descendeth from above, encompassed with clouds and darkness, preceded by fire and hail, proclaimed by thunder and earthquake, and attended by lightnings and whirlwinds. The mountains smoke, and the rocks melt before him ; the foundations of the globe are uncovered, and the deep from beneath is moved at his presence. The adversary is dismayed and confounded ; opposition, in the height of its career, feels the blast through all its powers, and instantly withers away. The anointed of God, according to his original designation, is at length elevated to the throne ; his sceptre is extended over the nations ; the temple is planned by him, and erected by his son ; the services of religion are appointed in perfect order and beauty ; Jerusalem becometh a praise in all the earth ; and the kingdom is established in honour, peace, and felicity. If in Psalms of the former kind the holy Jesus might behold those persecutions and sufferings, under which he was to be humbled, and to mourn, during his pilgrimage here below ; in Psalms of this latter sort, he might strengthen and console himself, as a man ‘ touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and tempted in all points like as we are,’ by viewing the glory that should follow ; by contemplating the manifestation of the Father in favour of his beloved

Son ; his own joyful resurrection, triumphant ascension, and magnificent inauguration ; the conversion of the world, and the establishment of the church ; events which were foreshadowed by those above mentioned : and to which, when the strongest expressions made use of by the divine Psalmist are applied, they will no longer appear hyperbolical ; especially if we bear in mind, that these prophetic descriptions wait for their full and final accomplishment at that day, when the mystical 'body of Christ,' having 'filled up that which is behind of his afflictions,'¹ shall also, amidst the pangs and convulsions of departing nature, arise from the dead, and ascend into heaven ; where all the members of that body, which have been afflicted and have mourned with their Lord and Master, shall be comforted and glorified together with him.²

In some of the Psalms, David appears as one suffering for his sins. When man speaks of sin, he speaks of what is his own ; and therefore, every Psalm where sin is confessed to be the cause of sorrow, belongs originally and properly to us, as

¹ Colos. i. 24.

² Neque prætermittendum illud Augustini passim : tunc Psal-mos videri suavissimos, ac divinissimâ luce perfusos, cùm in his caput et membra, Christum et Ecclesiam, sive apertè propalatos, sive latenter designatos intelligimus—Quare iterùm atque iterùm erigamus animos : atque ubi Davidem atque Solomonem ; ubi Davidis hostes, Saülem, Achitophelem, alios ; ubi bella et pacem, captivitatem, libertatem, ac cætera ejusmodi audimus ; tum animo infigamus Christum, et Ecclesiam laboribus pericu-lisque exercitam, atque inter adversa et prospera peregrinantem ; tum sanctorum persecutores, non modò visibles, sed etiam in-visibles illas atque aëreas potestates, pugnasque in hâc vitâ perpetes, ac secuturam postea pacem sempiternam.—Bossuet, Dissertat. in Psal. ad fin.

fallen sons of Adam, like David and all other men. This is the case of the fifty-first, and the rest of those which are styled Penitential Psalms, and have always been used in the church as such. Sometimes, indeed, it happens, that we meet with heavy complaints of the number and burden of sins, in Psalms from which passages are quoted in the New Testament as uttered by our Redeemer, and in which there seems to be no change of person, from beginning to end. We are assured, for instance, by the apostle, Heb. x. 5, that the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses of the fortieth Psalm, 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire,' &c. are spoken by Messiah coming to abolish the legal sacrifices, by the oblation of himself once for all. The same person, to appearance, continues speaking, and, only three verses after, complains in the following terms: 'Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.' So again, there are no less than five quotations from different parts of the sixtieth Psalm, all concurring to inform us that Christ is the speaker through that whole Psalm. Yet the fifth verse of it runs thus: 'O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my ~~w~~ guiltiness is not hid from thee.' The solution of this difficulty given, and continually insisted on, in the writings of the Fathers, is this; that Christ, in the day of his passion, standing charged with the sin and guilt of

his people, speaks of such their sin and guilt as if they were his own, appropriating to himself those debts for which, in the capacity of a surety, he had made himself responsible. The lamb which under the law, was offered for sin, took the name חטא, 'guilt,' because the guilt contracted by the offer was transferred to that innocent creature, and typically expiated by its blood.¹ Was not this exactly the case, in truth and reality, with the Lamb of God? 'He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; but he bare our sins in his own body on the tree.'² 'He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might he made the righteousness of God in him.'³ Christ and the church compose one mystical person, of which he is the head, and the church the body; and as the body speaks by the head, and the head for the body, he speaks of her sin, and she of his righteousness; which consideration is at the same time a key to any claims of righteousness made in the Psalms by her, and to any confession of sin made by him. This seems to be a satisfactory account of the matter. Such, at least, appears to have been the idea generally adopted and received, in the first ages of the Christian church; a circumstance which, it is presumed, will be deemed a sufficient apology for the author, if, in the explication of such passages, he hath ventured to proceed accordingly. Nay, and even in reciting the Penitential Psalms, when the unhappy

¹ See Levit. v. 6.

² 1 Pet. ii. 22.

³ 2 Cor. v. 21.

sufferer is ready to sink down under that weight of woe which sin hath laid upon him, if he will extend his thoughts, as he is sometimes directed to do to that holy and most innocent person, who felt and sorrowed so much for us all, he will thereby furnish himself with the best argument for patience, and an inexhaustible source of comfort. Nor can it, indeed, well be imagined, that our blessed Lord, as a member of the Jewish church, and an attendant on the service of the synagogue, though conscious to himself of no sin, did not frequently join with his 'brethren according to the flesh,' in the repetition of the Penitential, as well as the other Psalms, on the days of humiliation and expiation, when the use of them might be prescribed. If, from his circumcision to his crucifixion, 'he bare our sins in his own body ;' why should it be thought strange, that he should confess them, on our behalf, with his own mouth ?

The offence taken at the supposed uncharitable and vindictive spirit of the imprecations, which occur in some of the Psalms, ceases immediately, if we change the imperative for the future, and read, not 'let them be confounded,' &c. but, 'they shall be confounded,' &c. of which the Hebrew is equally capable. Such passages will then have no more difficulty in them, than the other frequent predictions of divine vengeance in the writings of the prophets, or denunciations of it in the gospels, intended to warn, to alarm, and to lead sinners to repentance, that they may fly from the wrath to

come. This is Dr. Hammond's observation ; who very properly remarks, at the same time, that in many places of this sort, as particularly in Psalm cix. (and the same may be said of Psalm lxix.) it is reasonable to resolve, that Christ himself speaketh in the prophet ; as being the person there principally concerned, and the completion most signal in many circumstances there mentioned ; the succession especially of Matthias to the apostleship of Judas. It is true, that in the citation made by St. Peter from Psal. cix. in Acts, i. 20, as also in that made by St. Paul from Psal. lxix. in Rom. xi. 9, the imperative form is preserved ; ' let his habitation be void,' &c. ' let their table be made a snare,' &c. But it may be considered, that the apostles generally cited from the Greek of the LXX. version ; and took it as they found it, making no alteration, when the passage, as it there stood, was sufficient to prove the main point which it was adduced to prove. If the imprecatory form be still contended for, all that can be meant by it, whether uttered by the Prophet, by Messiah, or by ourselves, must be a solemn ratification of the just judgments of the Almighty against his impenitent enemies, like what we find ascribed to the blessed spirits in heaven, when such judgments were executed : Rev. xi. 17, 18, xvi. 5, 6, 7 : see Merrick's Annotations on Psal. cix. and Witsii Miscellan. Sacr. lib. i. cap. xviii. sect 24. But, by the future rendering of the verbs, every possible objection is precluded at once. This method

has therefore been adopted in the ensuing Commentary.

Of the Psalms which relate to Israel, some are employed in celebrating the mercies vouchsafed them, from their going forth out of Egypt, to their complete settlement in Canaan. These were the constant standing subjects of praise and thanksgiving in the Israelitish church. But we are taught, by the writers of the New Testament, to consider this part of their history as one continued figure, or allegory. We are told that there is another spiritual Israel of God; other children of Abraham, and heirs of the promise; another circumcision; another Egypt, from the bondage of which they are redeemed; another wilderness, through which they journey; other dangers and difficulties which there await them; other bread from heaven for their support; and another rock to supply them with living water; other enemies to overcome; another land of Canaan, and another Jerusalem, which they are to obtain, and to possess for ever. In the same light are to be viewed the various provocations and punishments, captivities and restorations, of old Israel afterwards, concerning which it is likewise true, that they 'happened unto them for ensamples,' types,¹ or figures 'and were written for our admonition.'² Care has therefore been taken to open and apply, for that salutary purpose, the Psalms which treat of the above-mentioned particulars.

¹ Gr. Τύποι.

² 1 Cor. x. 11.

What is said in the Psalms occasionally of the law and its ceremonies, sacrifices, ablutions, and purifications ; of the tabernacle and temple, with the services therein performed ; and of the Aaronical priesthood ; all this Christians transfer to the new law ; to the oblation of Christ ; to justification by his blood, and sanctification by his Spirit ; to the true tabernacle, or temple not made with hands ; and to what was therein done for the salvation of the world, by Him who was, in one respect, a Sacrifice ; in another, a Temple ; and in a third, an High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek. That such was the intention of these legal figures, is declared at large in the Epistle to the Hebrews : and they are of great assistance to us now, in forming our ideas of the realities to which they correspond. "Under the Jewish economy," says the excellent Mr. Pascal, "truth appeared but in a figure ; in heaven it is open, and without a veil ; in the church militant it is so veiled, as to be yet discerned by its correspondence to the figure. As the figure was first built upon the truth, so the truth is now distinguishable by the figure." The variety of strong expressions used by David in the nineteenth and the hundred and nineteenth Psalms, to extol the enlivening, saving, healing, comforting efficacy of a law, which, in the letter of it, whether ceremonial or moral, without pardon and grace, could minister nothing but condemnation, do sufficiently prove, that David understood the spirit of it, which was the Gospel

itself.¹ And if any, who recited those Psalms, had not the same idea, it was not the fault of the Law or of the Psalms, of Moses or of David, or of him who inspired both, but it was their own; as it is that of the Jews, at this hour, though their prophecies have now been fulfilled, and their types realized. “He that takes his estimate of the Jewish religion from the grossness of the Jewish multitude,” as the last cited author observes, “cannot fail of making a very wrong judgment. It is to be sought for in the sacred writings of the prophets, who have given us sufficient assurance, that they understood the law not according to the letter. Our religion, in like manner, is true and divine in

¹ Hæc inter, veri et spirituales Judæi, hoc est, ante Christum Christi discipuli, altiora cogitabant, et rerum celestium Sacra-
menta venerati, novam Jerusalem, novum templum, novam ar-
cam intuebantur. Bossuet, Dissertat. in Psal. cap. i.—Lex,
juxta Spiritum accepta, ipsum erat Evangelium, sub veteribus
figuris delitescens, et ceremoniarum velis obtectum, ab ipso qui-
dem Mose (imprimis in Deuteronomio) aliquatenus et pro tem-
porum ratione explicatum, a prophetis verò succendentibus (ut
visum est Divinæ Sapientiae), dilucidus ostensum, demum a
Christo et apostolis plenissime et luce ipso sole clariori patefac-
tum.—Bulli Opera per Grabe, p. 614.—If the Jews, as our
Saviour tells them, ‘though they had eternal life in their Scrip-
tures,’ they must needs have understood them in a spiritual
sense; and I know not what other spiritual sense, that should
lead them to the expectation of eternal life, they could put on
their Scriptures, but that prophetic or typical sense, which re-
spected the Messiah. Jesus expressly asserts, at the same time,
that their ‘Scriptures testified of Him.’ How generally they
did so, he explained at large, in that remarkable conversation
with two of his disciples after his resurrection; when, beginning
at ‘Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all
the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.’—Hurd’s Introd.
to the Study of the Prophecies, Serm. ii.

the Gospels, and in the preaching of the apostles ; but it appears utterly disfigured in those who maim or corrupt it."

Besides the figures supplied by the history of Israel, and by the law, there is another set of images often employed in the Psalms, to describe the blessings of redemption. These are borrowed from the natural world, the manner of its original production, and the operations continually carried on in it. The visible works of God are formed to lead us, under the direction of his word, to a knowledge of those which are invisible ; they give us ideas, by analogy, of a new creation rising gradually, like the old one, out of darkness and deformity, until at length it arrives at the perfection of glory and beauty ; so that while we praise the Lord for all the wonders of his power, wisdom, and love displayed in a system which is to wax old and perish, we may therein contemplate, as in a glass, those new heavens, and that new earth, of whose duration there shall be no end.¹ The sun, that fountain of life, and heart of the world, that bright leader of the armies of heaven, enthroned in glorious majesty ; the moon shining with a lustre borrowed from his beams ; the stars glittering by night in the clear firmament ; the air giving breath to all things that live and move ; the interchanges of

¹ Read nature ; nature is a friend to truth ;
Nature is Christian, preaches to mankind ;
And bids dead matter aid us in our creed.

YOUNG.

light and darkness; the course of the year, and the sweet vicissitudes of seasons; the rain and the dew descending from above, and the fruitfulness of the earth caused by them; the bow bent by the hands of the Most High, which compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle; the awful voice of thunder, and the piercing power of lightning; the instincts of animals,¹ and the qualities of vegetables and minerals; the great and wide sea, with its unnumbered inhabitants; all these are ready to instruct us in the mysteries of faith and the duties of morality:—

They speak their Maker as they can,
But want and ask the tongue of man.—PARNELL.

¹ “I believe a good natural philosopher might show, with great reason and probability, that there is scarce beast, bird, reptile, or insect, that does not, in each particular climate, instruct and admonish mankind of some necessary truth for their happiness either in body or mind.”—Dr. Cheyne’s Philosophical Conjectures on the Preference of Vegetable Food, p. 73. That which a celebrated writer has observed concerning a poet, may perhaps be equally applicable to a divine—“To him nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is dreadful, should be familiar to his imagination: he should be conversant with all that is awfully vast, or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, should all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety; for every idea is useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth; and he who knows most, will have most power of diversifying his scenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote allusions, and unexpected instruction. By him, therefore, no kind of knowledge should be overlooked. He should range mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and picture upon his mind every tree of the forest, and flower of the valley; the crags of the rock, and the mazes of the stream.”—Rasselas, chap. x. The reader may see this exemplified in some “Disquisitions on Select Subjects of Scripture,” by my worthy friend, the Rev. Mr. Jones, whose labours make it evident, that true philosophy will ever be the handmaid of true divinity.

The advantages of Messiah's reign are represented, in some of the Psalms, under images of this kind. We behold a renovation of all things, and the world, as it were, new created, breaks forth into singing. The earth is crowned with sudden verdure and fertility; the field is joyful, and all that is in it; the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; the floods clap their hands in concert, and ocean fills up the mighty chorus, to celebrate the advent of the Great King.

Similar to these, are the representations of spiritual mercies by temporal deliverances from sickness, prison, danger of perishing in storms at sea, and from the sundry kinds of calamity and death, to which the body of man is subject; as also by scenes of domestic felicity, and by the flourishing state of well-ordered communities, especially that of Israel in Canaan, which, while the benediction of Jehovah rested upon it, was a picture of heaven itself. The foregoing and every other species of the sacred imagery, if there be any other not hitherto included, it hath been the author's main endeavour to illustrate. And a view of what is done in this way will, it is humbly hoped, afford some reason to think, there may not be that necessary connexion, which a late noble writer has been pleased to suppose between devotion and dulness.

The Psalms which remain are such as treat, in plain terms, without figures or examples, of wisdom and folly, righteousness and sin; the happiness produced by one, and the misery caused by the

other ; of particular virtues and vices ; of the vanity of human life ; of the attributes of God ; of that patience with which the faithful should learn to bear the sight of wickedness triumphant in this world, looking forward to the day of final retribution ; and subjects of the like nature. As Psalms of this kind call for little in the expository way, the general doctrines or precepts implied in them, or suggested by them, are drawn forth in short reflections, attempted after the manner of those made by father Quesnel on each verse of the New Testament. The opportunity of doing this, where nothing else seemed to be required, and indeed of doing, upon every occasion, what did seem to be required in any way, was the reason for throwing the work into its present form, rather than that of a paraphrase, or any other. Some repetitions, in a performance of this sort, are unavoidable. But a Commentary on the Book of Psalms is not to be read all at once ;¹ and it was thought better to give the exposition of each Psalm complete in itself, than to refer the reader elsewhere ; which, therefore, is only done, when passages of a considerable length occur in two Psalms, without any material difference.

¹ The most profitable way of reading it, perhaps, would be, by small portions, often reviewing the text and the comment, and comparing them carefully together ; at times when the mind is most free, vacant, and calm ; in the morning, more especially, to prepare and fortify it for the business of the day ; and in the evening, to recompose, and set in order, for the approaching season of rest.

Such is the method the author has taken, such the authorities upon which he has proceeded, and such the rules by which he has directed himself. If consistency and uniformity in the comment have been the result, they will afford, it is hoped, no contemptible argument on its behalf; since it is scarce possible to expound uniformly, on an erroneous plan, so great a variety of figurative language, as is to be found in the book of Psalms.¹

Let us stop for a moment, to contemplate the true character of these sacred hymns.

Greatness confers no exemption from the cares and sorrows of life. Its share of them frequently bears a melancholy proportion to its exaltation. This the Israelitish monarch experienced. He sought in piety that peace which he could not find in empire, and alleviated the disquietudes of state with the exercises of devotion.

¹ The student in theology, who is desirous of farther information upon a subject so curious, so entertaining, and so interesting, as that of the figurative language of Scripture, the principles on which it is founded, and the best rules to be observed in the sober and rational interpretation of it, may find satisfaction, by consulting the following authors:—

Lowth's Preface to his Commentary on the Prophets.

Lowth, Prælect. de Sacr. Poes. Heb. Prælect. iv.—xii.

Paschal's Thoughts, sect. x.—xiv.

Hurd's Introd. to the Study of the Prophecies. Serm. ii. iii. iv.

Vitrina, Observat. Sacr. lib. vi. cap. xx. et lib. vii.

_____, Praefat. ad Comment. in Jesaiam.

Glassii Philologia Sacra, lib. ii.

Witsii Miscellan. Sacra, tom. i. lib. iii. cap. iii. lib. ii. Dissert. i. ii. Œconom. Fœd. lib. iv. cap. vi.—x.

Waterland's General Preface to Scripture Vindicated.

His invaluable Psalms convey those comforts to others which they afforded to himself. Composed upon particular occasions, yet designed for general use ; delivered out as services for Israelites under the law, yet no less adapted to the circumstances of Christians under the Gospel ; they present religion to us in the most engaging dress ; communicating truths which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry can never equal ; while history is made the vehicle of prophecy, and creation lends all its charms to paint the glories of redemption. Calculated alike to profit and to please, they inform the understanding, elevate the affections, and entertain the imagination. Indited under the influence of Him to whom all hearts are known, and all events foreknown, they suit mankind in all situations, grateful as the manna which descended from above, and conformed itself to every palate. The fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands, and lose their fragrance ; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful ; their bloom appears to be daily heightened ; fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellencies, will desire to taste them yet again ; and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best.

And now, could the author flatter himself, that any one would take half the pleasure in reading the following exposition, which he hath taken in writ-

ing it, he would not fear the loss of his labour. The employment detached him from the bustle and hurry of life, the din of politics, and the noise of folly ; vanity and vexation flew away for a season, care and disquietude came not near his dwelling. He arose, fresh as the morning, to his task ; the silence of the night invited him to pursue it ; and he can truly say, that food and rest were not preferred before it. Every Psalm improved infinitely upon his acquaintance with it, and no one gave him uneasiness but the last ; for then he grieved that his work was done. Happier hours than those which have been spent on these meditations on the Songs of Sion, he never expects to see in this world. Very pleasantly did they pass, and moved smoothly and swiftly along ; for when thus engaged, he counted no time. They are gone, but have left a relish and a fragrance upon the mind, and the remembrance of them is sweet.

—But, alas ! these are the fond effusions of parental tenderness. Others will view the production with very different eyes : and the harsh voice of inexorable criticism will too soon awaken him from his pleasing dream. He is not insensible, that many learned and good men, whom he does not therefore value and respect the less, have conceived strong prejudices against the scheme of interpretation here pursued ; and he knows how little the generality of modern Christians have been accustomed to speculations of this kind ; which, it may likewise, perhaps, be said, will give occasion to the

scoffs of our adversaries, the Jews and the deists. Yet, if in the preceding pages it hath been made to appear, that the application of the Psalms to evangelical subjects, times, and circumstances, stands upon firm ground ; that it may be prosecuted upon a regular and consistent plan ; and that it is not only expedient, but even necessary to render the use of them in our devotions rational and profitable ; will it be presumption in him to hope that, upon a calm and dispassionate review of the matter, prejudices may subside, and be done away ? If men, in these days, have not been accustomed to such contemplations, is it not high time they should become so ? Can they begin too soon to study, and make themselves masters of, a science which promises to its votaries so much entertainment, as well as improvement ; which recommends the Scriptures to persons of true taste and genius, as books intended equally for our delight and instruction ; which demonstrates the ways of celestial wisdom to be ways of pleasantness, and all her paths to be peace indeed ? From the most sober, deliberate, and attentive survey of the sentiments which prevailed upon this point, in the first ages of the church, when the apostolical method of citing and expounding the Psalms was fresh upon the minds of their followers, the author cannot but be confident, that his Commentary, if it had then made its appearance, would have been universally received and approved, as to the general design of it, by the whole Christian world. And, however the Jews, in

their present state of alienation and unbelief, may reject and set at nought such applications of their Scriptures to our Messiah and his chosen people, as they certainly will do; he is not less confident, that, whenever the happy and glorious day of their conversion shall come, and the veil shall be taken from their hearts, they will behold the Psalter in that light in which he has endeavoured to place it.¹ As to the deists, they, while they continue such, can have neither lot nor part in this matter; for giving no credit to the Scripture account of things, either in the Old Testament or the New, to discourse with them concerning a connexion and analogy subsisting between the one and the other, is to reason about a fifth sense with a man who has

¹ “ If this appears to be the case in so many of the Psalms (namely, that they are predictive of Messiah,) how strongly does it justify our Lord's appeal to them as treating of Him! And what a noble argument may hence arise for the conviction and conversion of that extraordinary people, to whom they were originally communicated, when once the veil that is on their hearts shall be taken away, as by the same Spirit of prophecy we are assured it shall!”—The Bishop of Carlisle's Theory of Religion, p. 176, 6th edit. With what transports of zeal and devotion, of faith and love, will they recite these holy hymns, in the day when the whole body of the Jews, returning to the Lord their God, shall acknowledge their unparalleled crime in the murder of their King, and their penitential sorrow for the same, perhaps, as his lordship intimates, in the words of the fifty-first Psalm: “ Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. O do good in thy good pleasure to Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem!”

only four. For the conviction both of the Jews and deists, other arguments are to be urged; arguments from undeniable miracles openly wrought, and plain prophecies literally fulfilled. Such proofs are 'for them that believe not.' And such have been repeatedly urged, in their full force, by the many able champions, who have stood forth (success evermore attend their labours!) in defence of the evidences of Christianity. Expositions and meditations, like those in the subsequent pages, serve not, nor are intended to serve, 'for them who believe not, but for them who believe;'¹ who will exercise their faculties in discerning and contemplating the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and who are going on unto perfection; to increase their faith, and inflame their charity: to delight them in prosperity, to comfort them in adversity, to edify them at all times. Such effects, the author doubts not, will be experienced by believers, who will read this book with an honest and good heart, with seriousness and attention; for though he humbly trusts it will not be deemed altogether unworthy a place in the libraries of the learned, he builds chiefly on that approbation which he is solicitous it should receive in the closets of the devout; as considering, that it is love, heavenly love, which 'never faileth; but whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

prophecy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.'¹ They who find not the wished-for satisfaction in one portion, will find it in another; they who disapprove of an interpretation at the first reading, may, perhaps, approve of it at the second; and they who still continue to disapprove of some particulars, will not therefore disdain to accept the benefit of the rest. He has written to gratify no sect or party, but for the common service of all who call upon the name of Jesus, wheresoever dispersed, and howsoever distressed, upon the earth. When he views the innumerable unhappy differences among Christians, all of whom are equally oppressed with the cares and calamities of life, he often calls to mind those beautiful and affecting words which Milton represents Adam as addressing to Eve, after they had wearied themselves with mutual complaints and accusations of each other :—

But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere ; but strive,
In offices of love, how we may lighten
Each other's burden in our share of woe.

B. x. V. 958.

Enough has been given to the arts of controversy. Let something be given to the studies of piety and a holy life. If we can once unite in these, our tempers may be better disposed to unite in doctrine. When we shall be duly prepared to receive it, "God may reveal even this unto us." To increase the number of disputes among us, is, therefore, by

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

no means the intent of this publication. The author having, for many years, accustomed himself to consider and apply the Psalms, while he recited them, according to the method now laid down, has never failed to experience the unspeakable benefit of it, both in public and in private; and would wish, if it so pleased God, that death might find him employed in meditations of this kind.¹ He has likewise frequently taken occasion, in the course of his ministry, to explain a Psalm, upon the same plan, from the pulpit; and whenever he has done so, whether the audience were learned or unlearned, polite or rustic, he has generally had the happiness to find the discourse, in an especial manner, noticed and remembered. But still many may be of a different opinion, who may conscientiously believe the doctrines, and practise the duties of the Gospel, whether they see them shadowed out in the Psalms or not. Such will enjoy their own liberty, and permit their brethren to do the same. Or, if they shall think it necessary to take up the polemical pen, he desires only to receive that treatment which he has himself shown to every writer, cited or referred to by him.² In-

¹ "I have lost a world of thime," said the learned Salmasius, on his death-bed; "If I had one year more, I would spend it in reading David's Psalms, and Paul's Epistles."

² *Detur igitur erratis meis venia: ipse demum exemplo meo mihi prosim, qui neminem eorum, a quibus dissenserim, contumeliis affeci; qui non, vltio criticorum, in diversæ sententiae propugnatores acriter invectus sum; qui denique eam veniam antecessoribus meis libens tribui, quam ab iis, qui hæc in manus sumturi sint, velim impetrare. Pearce in Praefat. ad edit. Cic. de Oratore.*

stead of engaging in a tedious, and perhaps, unprofitable altercation upon the subject, he feels himself at present much rather inclined, in such a case, to follow, at his proper distance, the amiable example of his greatly respected Diocesan, who reprinted in England the objections made by a foreign professor, to some parts of his Lectures on the Hebrew Poetry, and left the public to form its own judgment between them.* From that Public, the author of the following work is now to expect the determination of his fate. Should its sentence be in his disfavour, nothing further remains to be said, than that he has honestly and faithfully endeavoured to serve it, to the utmost of his power, in the way in which he thought himself best able; and to give the world some account of that time, and those opportunities, which by the providence of a gracious God, and the munificence of a pious Founder, he has long enjoyed in the happy retirement of a college.

¹ “In his si quæ sunt, quæ mihi minus persuasit Vir Clarissimus, ea malui hoc modo libero lectorum nostrorum judicio permittere, quam in disceptationem et controversiam injucundam, et fortasse infructuosam, vocare.”—Lowth, in Praef. ad edit. 2dam Praelect. de Sacra Poesi Hebræorum. “Authors should avoid, as much as they can,” says another very learned critic, “replies and rejoinders, the usual consequences of which are, loss of time and loss of temper. Happy is he who is engaged in controversy with his own passions, and comes off superior; who makes it his endeavour, that his follies and weaknesses may die before him, and who daily meditates on mortality and immortality.”—Jortin’s Preface to his Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, p. xxxiv.

TABLE OF PSALMS.

That the reader may the more easily turn to such Psalms as will best suit the present state of his mind, according to the different circumstances, whether external or internal, into which, by the changes and chances of life, or the variations of temper and disposition, he may, at any time, be thrown, the common Table of Psalms, classed under their several subjects, is here subjoined.

PRAYERS.

- I. *Prayers* for pardon of sin. *Psalm* 6, 25, 38, 51, 130.
Psalms styled *Penitential*, 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.
- II. *Prayers* composed when the Psalmist was deprived of an opportunity of the public exercise of religion. *Psalm* 42, 43, 63, 84.
- III. *Prayers* wherein the Psalmist seems extremely dejected, though not totally deprived of consolation, under his afflictions. *Psalm* 13, 22, 69, 77, 88, 143.
- IV. *Prayers* wherein the Psalmist asketh help of God, in consideration of his own integrity, and the uprightness of his cause. *Psalm* 7, 17, 26, 35.
- V. *Prayers* expressing the firmest trust and confidence in God under afflictions. *Psalm* 3, 16, 27, 31, 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 71, 86.

VI. *Prayers* composed when the people of God were under affliction or persecution. *Psalm* 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 89, 94, 102, 123, 137.

VII. The following are likewise *Prayers* in time of trouble and affliction. *Psalm* 4, 5, 11, 28, 41, 55, 59, 64, 70, 109, 120, 140, 141, 142.

VIII. *Prayers of Intercession.* *Psalm* 20, 67, 122, 132, 144.

PSALMS OF THANKSGIVING.

I. *Thanksgivings* for mercies vouchsafed to particular persons. *Psalm* 9, 18, 22, 30, 34, 40, 75, 103, 108, 116, 118, 138, 144.

II. *Thanksgivings* for mercies vouchsafed to the Israelites in general. *Psalm* 46, 48, 65, 66, 68, 76, 81, 85, 98, 105, 124, 126, 129, 135, 136, 149.

PSALMS OF PRAISE AND ADORATION, DISPLAYING THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

I. General acknowledgments of God's *Goodness* and *Mercy*, and particularly his care and protection of good men. *Psalm* 23, 34, 36, 91, 100, 103, 107, 117, 121, 145, 146.

II. *Psalms* displaying the *Power*, *Majesty*, *Glory*, and other attributes of the Divine Being. *Psalm* 8, 19, 24, 29, 33, 47, 50, 65, 66, 76, 77, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 111, 113, 114, 115, 134, 139, 147, 148, 150.

INSTRUCTIVE PSALMS.

I. The different characters of good and bad men: the happiness of the one, and the miseries of the other, are represented in the following *Psalms*, 1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 50, 52, 53, 58, 73, 75, 84, 91, 92, 94, 112, 119, 121, 125, 127, 128, 133.

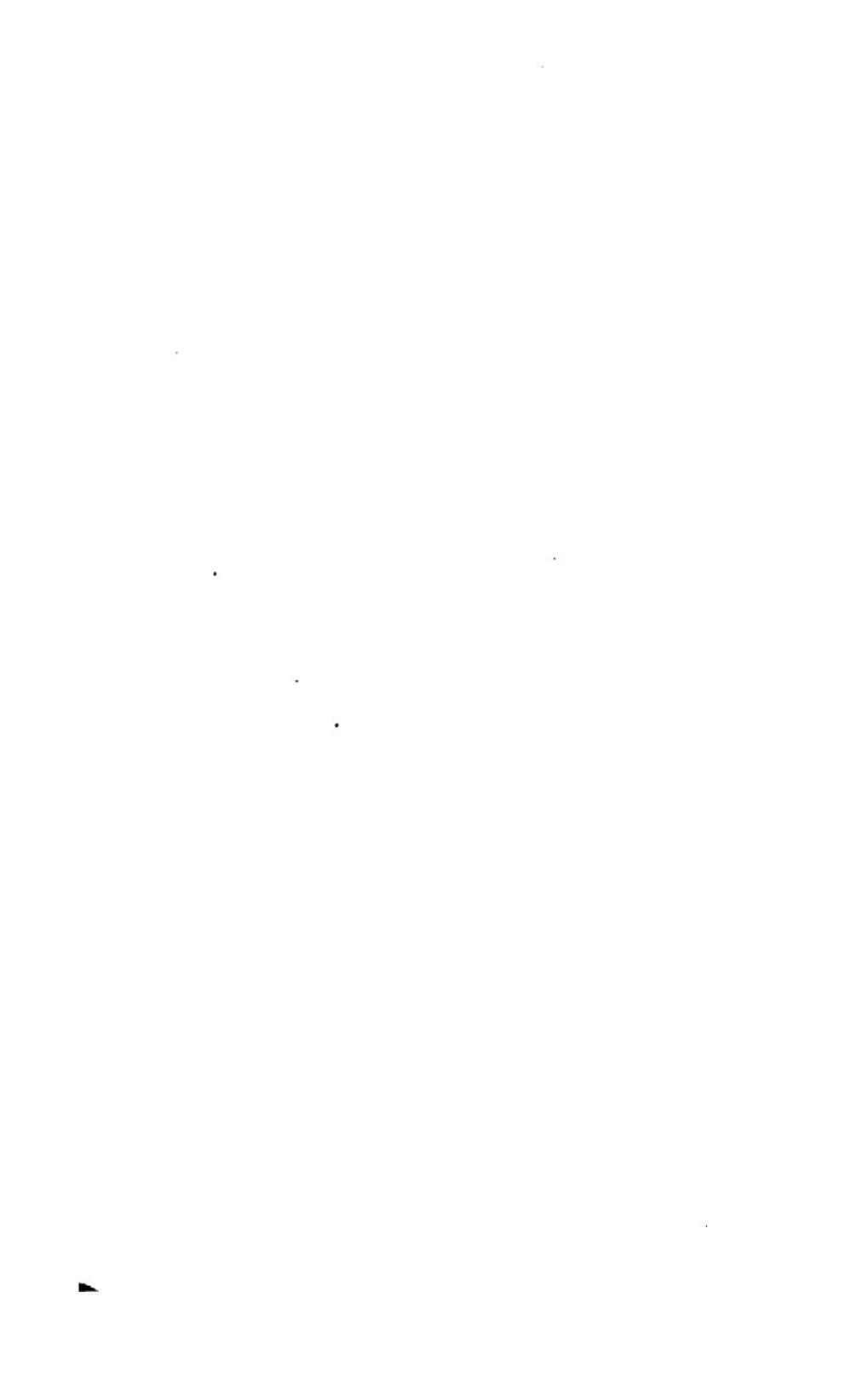
- II. The Excellence of God's Law. *Psalm 19, 119.*
- III. The Vanity of Human Life. *Psalm 39, 49, 90.*
- IV. Advice to Magistrates. *Psalm 82, 101.*
- V. The Virtue of Humility. *Psalm 131.*

**PSALMS MORE EMINENTLY AND DIRECTLY
PROPHETICAL.**

Psalm 2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 68, 72, 87, 110, 118.

HISTORICAL PSALMS.

Psalm 78, 105, 106.



A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

BOOK OF PSALMS.

First Day.—Morning Prayer.

PSALM I.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, which is generally looked upon by expositors as a preface or introduction to the rest, describes the blessedness of the righteous, consisting, verse 1. negatively, in their abstaining from sin ; 2. positively, in holy meditation on the Scriptures, productive of continual growth in grace, which, 3. is beautifully represented under an image borrowed from vegetation ; as, 4. is the opposite state of the unbelieving and ungodly, by a comparison taken from the threshing-floor. The last two verses foretel the final issue of things, with respect to both good and bad men, at the great day.

VERSE 1. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

The Psalter, like the Sermon on the Mount, openeth with a ‘ beatitude,’ for our comfort and encouragement, directing us immediately to that happiness which all mankind, in different ways,

are seeking and inquiring after. All would secure themselves from the incursions of misery ; but all do not consider that misery is the offspring of sin, from which it is therefore necessary to be delivered and preserved, in order to become happy, or ‘ blessed.’ The variety of expressions here used by David, intimateth to us, that there is a gradation in wickedness ; and that he who would not persist in evil courses, or commence a scoffer at the mystery of godliness, must have no fellowship with bad men : since it is impossible for any one, who forsakes the right path, to say, whither he shall wander ; and few, when they begin to ‘ walk in the counsel of the ungodly,’ propose finally to sit down in the ‘ seat of the scornful.’ O thou second Adam, who alone since the transgression of the first, hast attained a sinless perfection, make thy servants ‘ blessed,’ by making them ‘ righteous,’ through thy merits and grace !

2. But his delight is in the law of the Lord ; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

He who hath once brought himself to ‘ delight’ in the Scriptures, will find no temptation to exchange that pleasure for any which the world or the flesh can offer him. Such an one will make the lively oracles of God his companions by day and by night. He will have recourse to them for direction, in the bright and cheerful hours of prosperity ; to them he will apply for comfort, in the dark and dreary seasons of adversity. The enemy, when advancing to the assault, will always find him well employed, and will be received with—‘ Get thee behind me, Satan !’ When the law of God is the object of our studies and meditations,

we are conformed to the example of our Redeemer himself, who, as a man, while he ‘increased in stature,’ increased likewise ‘in wisdom,’ and grew powerful in the knowledge of the law which he was to fulfil, and of those prophecies which he was to accomplish; so that, at twelve years of age, he appeared to ‘have more understanding than all his teachers; for the divine testimonies had been his meditation.’ Ps. cxix. 99.

3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

By continual meditation in the sacred writings, a man as naturally improves and advances in holiness, as a ‘tree’ thrives and flourishes in a kindly and well-watered soil. All the ‘fruits’ of righteousness show themselves at their proper ‘season’ as opportunity calls for them; and his words, which are to his actions what the ‘leaves’ are to the fruit, fall not to the ground, but are profitable, as well as ornamental. Every thing in him and about him serves the purpose for which it was intended; his brethren are benefited by him, and his Maker is glorified. How eminently is this the case with that Tree of Life, which Jehovah planted in the midst of his new paradise, by waters of comfort; a tree which sprung out of the earth, but its height reached to heaven, and its breadth to the ends of the world! its shadow is for the protection, its fruit for the support, and its leaves for the healing, of the nations. It flourishes in immortal youth, and blooms for ever in unsading beauty. See Rev. xxii. 2.

4. The ungodly are not so; but like the chaff, which the wind driveth away.

In the foregoing description of the righteous, all appeared verdant and fruitful, lovely and enduring; but here, by way of contrast, we are presented with nothing but what is withered and worthless, without form or stability, blown about by every wind, and at length finally dispersed from the face of the earth, by the breath of God's displeasure, and driven into the fire prepared for it. Such is the state, such the lot of the 'ungodly'; and so justly are they compared to 'chaff.'

5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

A day is coming, when the divine Husbandman shall appear with his 'fan in his hand,' and shall 'thoroughly purge his floor.' The wheat, which shall stand the winnowing of that day, will be gathered into the celestial granary; while the chaff, for ever separated from it, shall be hurried out of the floor, and carried, by a mighty whirlwind, to its own place. Then shall there be a 'congregation of the righteous,' in which 'sinners shall not stand.' At present wheat and chaff lie in one floor; wheat and tares grow in one field; good and bad fishes are comprehended in one net; good and bad men are contained in the visible church. Let us wait with patience God's time of separation.

6. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

In the present scene of confusion, we may be, and often are, deceived in the judgment we form

of men. But it cannot be so with the Omniscient. ‘The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal,—The Lord knoweth them that are his;’ 2 Tim. ii. 19. Their good deeds are not unobserved, nor will they be forgotten by him. His eye seeth them in secret, and his hand will reward them openly, in the day of final retribution; when crowns of glory shall sparkle on the heads of the righteous, but shame and torment shall be the portion of the wicked; ‘the way of the ungodly shall perish.’

PSALM II.

ARGUMENT.—David, seated upon the throne of Israel, notwithstanding the opposition made against him, and now about to carry his victorious arms amongst the neighbouring heathen nations, may be supposed to have penned this, as a kind of inauguration Psalm. But that ‘a greater than David is here,’ appears not only from the strength of the expressions, which are more properly applicable to Messiah, than to David himself; but also from the citations made in the New Testament; the appointment of the Psalm by the church to be read on Easter-day; and the confessions of the Jewish rabbis. It treats therefore, 1—3. of the opposition raised, both by Jew and Gentile against the kingdom of Jesus Christ; 4—6. of his victory, and the confusion of his enemies; 7—9. after his resurrection, he preaches the Gospel; and, 10—12. calls the kings of the earth to accept it; denouncing vengeance against those who shall not do so, and pronouncing a blessing on those who shall.

1. *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?* 2. *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed,* saying,—

The true David is introduced, like his ancestor of old, expostulating with the nations, for their

vain attempts to frustrate the divine decree in his favour. These two verses are cited, Acts iv. 27, and thus expounded—‘Lord—of a truth, against thy holy child, Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.’ Persecution may be carried on by the people, but it is raised and fomented by kings and rulers. After the ascension of Christ, and the effusion of the Spirit, the whole power of the Roman empire was employed in the same cause, by those who, from time to time, swayed the sceptre of the world. But still, they who intended to extirpate the faith, and destroy the church, how many and how mighty soever they might be, were found only to ‘imagine a vain thing.’ And equally vain will every imagination be, that exalteth itself against the counsels of God for the salvation of his people.

3. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

These words, supposed to be spoken by the powers in arms against Messiah, discover to us the true ground of opposition, namely, the unwillingness of rebellious nature to submit to the obligations of divine laws, which cross the interests, and lay a restraint upon the desires, of men. Corrupt affections are the most inveterate enemies of Christ; and their language is, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’ Doctrines would be readily believed, if they involved in them no precepts; and the church may be tolerated by the world, if she will only give up her discipline.

4. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

By these and such like expressions, which frequently occur in the Scripture, we are taught in a language which we understand, because borrowed from ourselves, and our manner of showing contempt, how the schemes of worldly politicians appear to him, who sitting upon his heavenly throne surveys at a glance whatever men are doing, or contriving to do, upon the earth. This is the idea intended to be conveyed; and from it we are to separate all notions of levity, or whatever else may offend when applied to the Godhead, though adhering to the phrases as in use among the sons of Adam. The same is to be said with regard to words which seem to attribute many other human passions and affections to the Deity: as, for instance, these which follow:

5. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. 6. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

The meaning is, that by pouring out his indignation upon the adversaries of Messiah, as formerly upon those of David, God would no less evidently convict and reprove their folly and impiety, than if he had actually thus spoken to them from his eternal throne above: "Yet, notwithstanding all your rage against him, have I raised from the dead, and exalted as the Head of the church, my appointed King Messiah; in like manner as I once set his victorious representative David upon my holy hill of Sion, in the earthly Jerusalem, out of the reach of his numerous and implacable enemies." Let us

reflect, for our comfort, that He who raised up his son Jesus, has promised to raise up us also who believe in him ; and that the world can no more prevent the exaltation of the members, than it could prevent that of the Head.

7. I will declare the decree : the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son : this day have I begotten thee.

Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with honour and immortality, upon the holy hill of Zion, in the new Jerusalem, now ‘ declares the decree,’ or preaches the Gospel of the everlasting covenant. His part in the covenant was performed by keeping the law, and dying for the sins of men. Nothing therefore remained but the accomplishment of the promise made to him by the Father, upon those conditions. One part of this promise was fulfilled, saith St. Paul, ‘ in that he had raised up Jesus again ; as it is written in the second Psalm, ‘Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee :’ Acts, xiii. 33. Another part was fulfilled at the ascension of Christ, and his inauguration to an eternal kingdom, and an unchangeable priesthood, as the true Melchizedek, King of righteousness, King of peace, and Priest of the most high God. The next article in the covenant, on the Father’s side, was the enlargement of Messiah’s spiritual kingdom, by the accession of the nations to the church. And accordingly, this was the next thing which ‘ Jehovah said unto him,’ after having proclaimed his Sonship and pre-eminence ; as we find by the following verse :

8. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen

for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Christ was to enter upon the exercise of the intercessorial branch of his priestly office with a request of the Father, that the ‘heathen world might be given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession,’ in return for the labours he had undergone, and the pains he had endured: as also to supply the place of the Jews, who were his original ‘inheritance and possession,’ but were cast off, because of unbelief. That such request was made by Christ, and granted by the Father, the person who writes this, and he who reads it, in a once Pagan, but now Christian island, are both witnesses.

9. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

The irresistible power and inflexible justice of Christ’s kingdom are signified by his ‘ruling with a rod of iron;’ the impotence of those who presume to oppose him, is compared to that of ‘a potter’s vessel,’ which must fly in pieces at the first stroke of the iron rod. The power of Christ will be manifested in all, by the destruction either of sin, or the sinner. The hearts which now yield to the impressions of his Spirit, are broken only in order to be formed anew, and to become vessels of honour, fitted for the Master’s use. Those which continue stubborn and hardened, must be dashed in pieces by the stroke of eternal vengeance.

10. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. 11. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

The decree of the Father, concerning the king-

dom of the Son, being thus promulgated by the latter, an exhortation is made to the kings of the earth, that they would learn true wisdom, and suffer themselves to be instructed unto salvation; that they would bow their sceptres to the cross of Jesus, and cast their crowns before his throne; esteeming it a far greater honour, as well as a more exalted pleasure, to serve Him, than to find themselves at the head of victorious armies, surrounded by applauding nations.

12. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way; when his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

Christ beseeches kings, no less than their subjects, to be reconciled to him, and by him to the Father: since a day is at hand, when mighty men shall have no distinction, but that of being mightily tormented. And then will be seen the ‘blessedness’ of those who ‘put their trust in’ the Lord Jesus. For when the glory of man shall fade away as the short-lived flower of the field, and when all, that is called great and honourable in princes, shall be laid low in the dust, he shall give unto his faithful servants a crown without cares, and a kingdom which cannot be moved.

PSALM III.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm is said to have been composed by David, when he fled from his son Absalom. Thus circumstanced, he expresses himself in terms well adapted to the parallel case of the Son of David, persecuted by rebellious Israel; as also to that of his church, suffering tribulation in

the world. 1, 2. He complains, in much anguish of the multitude of his enemies, and of the reproaches cast upon him, as one forsaken by God ; but, 3. declares, notwithstanding, his sure trust in the divine promises ; 4, 5. he relates the success of his prayers, 6—8. derides the impotent malice of his enemies, and ascribes salvation to Jehovah.

*1. Lord, how are they increased that trouble me !
Many are they that rise up against me.*

David is astonished to find, that ‘ the hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom,’ 2 Sam, xv. 13; that his counsellors are revolted, and his friends falling off continually ; and that the king of Israel is forced to leave his capital mourning and weeping. Thus, led forth out of Jerusalem by his own children in arms against him, the holy Jesus went, forsaken and sorrowing, to the cross, in the day of trouble. Thus is the church oftentimes opposed and betrayed by her sons, and the Christian by his passions and affections. So true it is, that ‘ a man’s foes are they of his own household.’ But he who by prayer engages the assistance of Jehovah, will rise superior to them all.

2. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God.

Affliction and desertion are two very different things, but often confounded by the world. Shimei reviled David, as reprobated by heaven ; and the language of the Shimeis afterward, concerning the Son of David, was, ‘ He trusted in God ; let him deliver him now, if he will have him.’ See 2 Sam. xvi. 8 ; Matt. xxvii. 43. The fearful imaginations of our own desponding hearts, and the suggestions of our crafty adversary, frequently join to help forward this most dangerous temptation, in the

hour of sorrow. What therefore hath faith to offer
We shall hear—

*3. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; a
glory and the lifter up of my head.*

Such is the answer of David, and of all the saints, but above all, of the Kings of saints, to the temptation before mentioned. Jehovah is a 'shield against this, and all other fiery darts, shot by Satan and his associates : he is the 'glory' Christ and the church, with which they will one day be seen invested, though for a season it appears not to the world, any more than did the royalty of David, when, weeping and barefoot, he went to Mount Olivet: 2 Sam. xv. 30. The same Jehovah is 'the lifter up of our heads,' by the gift of his confidence, and the hope of a resurrection, through that of Jesus Christ, prefigured by the triumphal and happy return of David to Jerusalem.

*4. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and
heard me out of his holy hill.*

David driven from Jerusalem, still looked afar towards the 'holy hill' of Sion. Christ when a stranger on the earth, 'made supplication with strong crying,' to his Father in heaven. Christ was heard for his own sake ; David was heard, and we shall be heard through him.

*5. I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the
Lord sustained me.*

Behold David, in the midst of danger, sleeping without fear ; secure, through the divine protection, of awaking to engage and vanquish his enemies. Behold the Son of David composing his

If to his rest upon the cross, that bed of sorrows ;
and commanding his spirit into his Father's hands,
full confidence of a joyful resurrection, accord-
g to the promise, at the time appointed. Behold
is, O Christian, and let faith teach thee how to
sleep, and how to die ; while it assures thee, that
sleep is a short death, so death is only a longer
sleep ; and that the same God watches over thee,
thy bed and in thy grave.

6. *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, at have set themselves against me round about.*

Faith, revived and invigorated by prayer, and
rested on God alone, is a stranger to fear, in the
worst of times. The innumerable examples of
Saints rescued from tribulation, and, above all, the
resurrection of the Son of God from the dead,
render the believer bold as a lion, although the
name of his adversary be 'Legion.'

7. *Arise, O Lord ! save me, O my God ! for thou
art smitten all mine enemies upon the cheekbone ;
thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.*

The church, through Christ, prayeth in these
words of David, that Jehovah would arise as of
old time, in the power of his might ; that he would
nally break the power of Satan and his adherents ;
pluck the spoil out of the jaws of those beasts of
rey ; and work that glorious deliverance for the
members, which is already wrought for the Head,
the body mystical.

8. *Salvation belongeth, or, be ascribed, unto the
ord ; thy blessing is, or, be upon thy people.*

The Psalm ends with an acknowledgment, which

ought always to fill the heart, and, upon every proper occasion, to flow from the mouth of a Christian; namely, that 'salvation' is not to be had from man, from the kings of the earth, or the gods of the heathen, from saints or angels, but from Jehovah alone; to whom alone, therefore, the glory should be ascribed. If He will save, none can destroy; if He will destroy, none can save. Let Balak, then, curse Israel, or hire Balaam to curse them for him; be but 'thy blessing,' O Lord, upon thy people, and it sufficeth.

PSALM IV.

ARGUMENT.—The person speaking in this Psalm, 1. prayeth to be heard by God; 2. convinceth the world of sin; 3. declareth the righteous to be under the divine protection; 4, 5. prescribeth solitude and meditation, as the proper means to lead men to repentance and faith; 6. sheweth that in God alone peace and comfort are to be found; and, 7. how superior the joys of the spirit are to those of sense; 8. reposeth himself, in full assurance of faith, on the loving-kindness of the Lord.

1. *Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness; thou enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.*

The church, like David, 'calls' aloud, as one in great affliction, for God's assistance: she addresses him as the 'God of her righteousness,' as the fountain of pardon and grace; she reminds him of that spiritual liberty, and 'enlargement' from bondage, which he had purchased for her, and

oftentimes wrought in her; and, conscious of her demerits, makes her prayer for ‘mercy.’

2. O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing, or falsehood?

If the Israelitish monarch conceived he had just cause to expostulate with his enemies, for despising the royal majesty with which Jehovah had invested his Anointed ; of how much severer reproof shall they be thought worthy, who blaspheme the essential ‘glory’ of King Messiah, which shines forth by his Gospel in the church ? Thou, O Christ, art everlasting Truth ; all is ‘vanity and falsehood,’ transient and fallacious, but the love of thee !

3. But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself; the Lord will hear when I call upon him.

Be the opinions or the practices of men what they will, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. Is David ‘set apart’ for the kingdom of Israel ? Saul shall not be able to detain, nor Absalom to wrest, it from him. Is Messiah ordained to be King of the Israel of God ? death and hell shall not prevent it. Are his disciples appointed to reign with him ? infallibly they shall. Our Intercessor is already on high ; and for his sake, ‘the Lord will hear us when we call upon him.’ What, then, can be said for us, if we neglect to call upon him ?

4. Stand in awe, Heb. tremble, and sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.

The enemies of Christ, as well as those of David,

are here called to repentance, and the process of conversion is described. The above-mentioned consideration of the divine counsel, and the certainty of its being carried into execution, by the salvation of the righteous, and the confusion of their enemies, makes the wicked 'tremble.' 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ;' it arrests the sinner in his course, and he 'sins not ;' he goes no farther in the way of sin, but stops, and reflects upon what he has been doing : he 'communes with his own heart upon his bed, and is still ;' his conscience suffers him not to rest in the night, but takes the advantage of solitude and silence, to set before him his transgressions, with all the terrors of death and judgment ; stirring him up to confess the former, and deprecate the latter, with unfeigned compunction and sorrow of heart ; to turn unto the Lord, and to do works meet for repentance ; to learn to do good, as well as to cease from doing evil.

5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

The Jews are no longer to offer the shadowy sacrifices of their law, since He, who is the substance of them all, is come into the world. The Gentiles are no more to offer their idolatrous sacrifices, since their idols have fallen before the cross. But returning sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, are to offer the same 'sacrifices of' evangelical 'righteousness ;' not 'putting their trust' in them, but 'in the Lord' Jesus, through whose spirit they are enabled to offer, and through whose blood their offerings are acceptable unto God. Faith, hope, and charity, mutually strengthen each other,

and compose 'a threefold cord,' which is not easily broken.

6. There be *many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us!*

The two former verses were addressed to rebellious sinners, inviting them to repentance and reformation. This seems to relate to the righteous, who, in times of calamity and persecution, like the friends of distressed David, are tempted to despond, on seeing no end to their troubles. The Psalmist therefore prescribes prayer to all such, as an antidote against the temptation; he directs them, in the darkest night, to look towards heaven, nor doubt the return of day, when the rising sun shall diffuse light and salvation, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away. How many are continually asking the question in this verse! How few applying to Him, who alone can give an answer of peace and comfort!

7. *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.*

No sooner is the prayer preferred, but the answer is given; and the devout soul declares herself to experience a joy in the midst of tribulation, far superior to the joy with which men rejoice in the time of harvest, or that of vintage; a joy, bright and pure, as the regions from whence it descends. Such is the difference between the bread of earth, and that of heaven; between the juice of the grape, and the cup of salvation. Teach

us, O Lord, to discern this difference, and to choose aright!

8. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

This conclusion affords ample matter for profitable and delightful meditation, if it be considered, first, as spoken by David, or any other believer, when lying down to rest, full of the joys of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned; secondly, as pronounced by the true David, when composing himself to his rest, in certain hope of a resurrection. And happy the Christian, who having nightly, with this verse, committed himself to his bed, as to his grave, shall at last, with the same words, resign himself to his grave, as to his bed, from which he expects in due time to arise, and sing a morning hymn, with the children of the resurrection.

PSALM V.

ARGUMENT.—The Psalmist, in affliction, 1—3. continues and resolves to continue instant in prayer; 4—6. declares the irreconcileable hatred which God bears to sin, and, 7. his own confidence of being accepted; 8. he petitions for grace to direct and preserve him in the way; 9. sets forth the wickedness of his enemies; 10. foretels their punishment, and, 11, 12. the salvation of the faithful.

1. Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation, or, my dove-like mournings.

Although nothing can really hinder or divert the divine attention, yet God is represented as ‘not

hearing' when either the person is unacceptable, or the petition improper, or when he would thoroughly prove the faith and patience of the petitioner. Christ, the church, and the believing soul, are all in Scripture styled 'doves,' from their possessing the amiable properties of that bird of meekness and innocence, purity and love. 'The mournings' of such are always heard and attended to in heaven.

2. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God: for unto thee will I cry.

The voice of the suppliant's cry will be in proportion to the sense which he hath of his sin. Whom should a subject solicit, but his king? to whom should a sinner pray, but to his God? Let us often think upon the strong cryings of him who suffered for the sins of the world, and upon that intercession by which the pardon of those sins was procured.

3. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer, Heb. dispose, or set myself in order, unto or for thee, and will look up.

He who is good in earnest, and hath his heart fully bent upon the work of salvation, like other skilful and diligent artificers, will be 'early' in his application to it; he will get the start of the world, and take the advantage of the 'sweet hour of prime,' to 'dispose,' and 'set himself in order,' for the day. What is a slothful sinner to think of himself, when he reads, concerning the holy Jesus, that 'in the morning, rising up a great while be-

fore day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed!' Mark i. 35.

4. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness ; neither shall evil dwell with thee.

The Psalmist was encouraged to make his early prayers to God in the day of trouble, upon this consideration, that his righteous cause must finally prosper, and the divine counsels be accomplished in his exaltation, and the depression of his enemies, who were likewise the enemies of God. The same was the case and the confidence of a suffering Messiah ; and such is that of his church and people in the world, where 'wickedness' may prosper, and 'evil' not only live, but reign. Nevertheless, we know that 'God hath no pleasure' in them, nor shall they 'dwell with him,' as we hope to do.

5. The foolish, Heb. mad, shall not stand in thy sight ; for thou hatest all workers of iniquity. 6. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing, or falsehood ; the Lord doth abhor the blood-thirsty and deceitful man.

No objects of the senses can be so nauseous to them, as the various kinds of sin are in the sight of God. O could we but think, as he does, concerning these, we should rather choose 'madness' than transgression, and as soon fall in love with a plague-sore, as a temptation. 'Falsehood, blood-thirstiness, and deceitfulness,' are marked out as characteristic of the enemies of David, of Christ, and the church ; and history evinces them so to have been. Let us never go within the infection of such pestilential crimes.

7. But as for me, I will come into thy house in the

multitude of thy mercy ; and in thy fear will I worship towards thy holy temple.

Wisdom, righteousness, truth, mercy, and sincerity, form a character the reverse of that drawn in the preceding verses, and such a one as God will accept, when appearing before him in his house, and offering, with humility and reverence, the sacrifices of the new law, as David did those of the old, through faith in Him who alone filled up the character, and procured acceptance for believers, and their oblations.

8. Lead me O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies ; make thy way straight before my face.

The child of God, admitted into his holy temple, there prefers this petition, praying to be led by the divine Spirit in a course of holy obedience, all impediments being removed out of the way, which otherwise might obstruct the progress, or cause the fall, of one beginning to walk in the path of life, of one who had many ‘enemies’ ready to contrive, to take advantage of, to rejoice and triumph in, his ruin. Thus a man’s enemies, while they oblige him to pray more fervently, and to watch more narrowly over his conduct, oftentimes become his best friends.

9. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth ; their inward part is very wickedness ; their throat is an open sepulchre ; they flatter with their tongue.

A part of this verse is cited, Rom. iii. 13, together with several other passages from the Psalms and Prophets, to evince the depravity of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles, till justified by faith,

and renewed by grace. It is plain, therefore, that the description was designed for others, besides the enemies of the literal David, and is of more general import, reaching to the world of the ungodly, and to the enemies of all righteousness, as manifested in the person of Messiah, and in his church. The charge brought against these is, that 'truth' and 'fidelity' were not to be found in their dealings with God or each other; that their 'inward parts' were very wickedness; their first thoughts and imaginations were defiled, and the stream was poisoned at the fountain; that their 'throat was an open sepulchre,' continually emitting, in obscene and impious language, the noisome and infectious exhalations of a putrid heart, entombed in a body of sin; and that, if ever they put on the appearance of goodness, they 'flattered with their tongue,' in order the more effectually to deceive and destroy. So low is human nature fallen! 'O thou Adam, what hast thou done? For though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee.' 2 Esd. vii. 48.

10. *Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels: cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against thee.*

Concerning passages of this imprecatory kind in the book of Psalms, it is to be observed, that they are not spoken of private and personal enemies, but of the opposers of God and his anointed; nor of any among these, but the irreclaimable and finally impenitent; and this by way of prediction, rather than imprecation; which would appear, if

the original verbs were translated uniformly in the future tense, as they might be, and indeed, to cut off all occasion from them which desire it, should be translated. The verse before us would then run thus:—"Thou wilt destroy them, O God; they shall perish by their own counsels: thou wilt cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against thee." The words, when rendered in this form, contain a prophecy of the infatuation, rejection, and destruction of such as should obstinately persevere in their opposition to the counsels of heaven, whether relating to David, to Christ, or to the church. The fate of Ahithopel and Absalom, of Judas and the Jews, should warn others not to offend after the same example.

11. But let all those that trust in thee rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. Heb. All they that trust in thee shall rejoice, &c.

As the last verse foretold the perdition of the ungodly, this describes the felicity of the saints; who, trusting in God, rejoice evermore, and sing aloud in the church the praises of their Saviour and mighty defender; the love of whose name fills their hearts with joy unspeakable, while they experience the comforts of grace, and expect the rewards of glory.

12. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

The 'blessing' of God descends upon us through Jesus Christ 'the righteous,' or 'just one,' as of old it did upon Israel through David, whom, for the benefit of his chosen, God protected, delivered

and placed upon the throne. Thou, O Christ, art the righteous Saviour, thou art the King of Israel, thou art the blessed of Jehovah, the fountain of blessing to all believers, and thy 'favour' is the defence and protection to the church militant.

PSALM VI.

First Day.—Evening Prayer.

ARGUMENT.—This is the first of those Psalms which are styled penitential. It contains, 1. a depreciation of eternal vengeance, and 2, 3. a petition for pardon; which is enforced from the consideration of the penitent's sufferings; 4. from that of the divine mercy; 5. from that of the praise and glory which God would fail to receive, if man were destroyed; 6, 7. from that of the penitent's humiliation and contrition: 8—10. the strain changes into one of joy and triumph, upon the success and return of the prayer.

1. *O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*

Let us suppose a sinner awakened to a true sense of his condition, and looking around him for help. Above is an angry God preparing to take vengeance; beneath, the fiery gulf ready to receive him; without him, a world in flames; within, the gnawing worm. Thus situated, he begins, in extreme agony of spirit, 'O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.' He expects that God will 'rebuke' him, but only prays that it may not be 'in anger' finally to destroy him; he desires to be chastened, but chastened in fatherly love, not in the 'hot displeasure' of an inexorable judge. As often as

'we are led thus to express our sense of sin, and dread of punishment, let us reflect on Him, whose righteous soul, endued with a sensibility peculiar to itself, sustained the sins of the world, and the displeasure of the Father.'

2. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak : O Lord, heal me ; for my bones are vexed,* Heb. *shaken, or, made to tremble.*

The penitent entreats for mercy, first, by representing his pitiable case, under the image of sickness. He describes his soul as deprived of all its health and vigour, as languishing and fainting, by reason of sin, which had eat out the vitals, and shaken all the powers and supporters of the spiritual frame, so that the breath of life seemed to be departing. Enough however was left, to supplicate the healing aid of the God of mercy and comfort ; to petition for oil and wine at the hands of the Physician of spirits. How happy is it for us, that we have a physician, who cannot but be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, seeing that he himself once took them upon him, and suffered for them, even unto the death of the cross, under which he 'fainted,' and on which 'his bones were vexed !'

3. *My soul is also sore vexed ; but thou, O Lord, how long ?*

Another argument is drawn from the sense which the penitent hath of this his woful condition, and the consternation and anxiety produced thereby in his troubled mind. These cause him to fly for refuge to the hope set before him. 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick ;' he is therefore beautifully represented as crying out, with a fond and longing im-

patience, ‘But thou, O Lord, how long?’ His strength is supposed to fail him, and the sentence is left imperfect. What, blessed Jesus, were thy ‘troubles,’ when to thy companions thou saidst, ‘My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?’ By those thy sorrows we beseech thee to hear the voice of thine afflicted church, crying to thee from the earth, ‘My soul also is sore troubled; but thou, O Lord, how long?’

4. *Return, O Lord, deliver my soul; Oh, save me for thy mercies' sake.*

A third argument is formed upon the consideration of God’s ‘mercy;’ for the sake of which, as it is promised to penitents, he is requested to ‘return,’ or to turn himself towards the suppliant; to lift up his countenance on the desponding heart; to ‘deliver’ it from darkness and the shadow of death, and to diffuse around it light and life, salvation, joy, and gladness, like the sun in the morning, when he revisits a benighted world, and calls up the creation to bless the Maker of so glorious a luminary, so bright a representative of redeeming love.

5. *For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?*

The fourth argument proceeds upon a supposition, that God created man for his own glory, which therefore, would be so far diminished, if man were permitted finally to perish. The body could not glorify God, unless raised from the dead, nor could the soul, if left in hell. The voice of thanksgiving is not heard in the grave, and no hallelujahs are sung in the pit of destruction. This plea, now

urged by the church, was urged for her without all doubt by her Saviour in his devotions, and prevailed in his mouth, as, through him, it will do in hers.

6. *I am weary with my groaning ; all the night make I my bed to swim : I water my couch with my tears.*

The penitent is supplied with a fifth argument, by the signs and fruits of a sincere repentance, which put forth themselves in him. Such was his sorrow, and such revenge did he take upon himself, that for every idle word he now poured forth a groan, like him that is in anguish through extremity of bodily pain, until he was ‘weary,’ but yet continued groaning ; while the sad remembrance of each wanton folly drew a tear from the fountains of grief. The all-righteous Saviour himself wept over sinners ; sinners read the story, and yet return again to their sins !

7. *Mine eye is consumed because of grief ; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.*

Grief exhausts the animal spirits, dims the eyes, and brings on old age before its time. Thus it is said, concerning the man of sorrows, that ‘many were astonished at him, his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men :’ Isa. lii. 14. How long, in these times, might youth and beauty last, were godly sorrow their only enemy !

8. *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity, for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.*

9. *The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will hear, or, hath heard, my prayer.*

Repentance, having performed her task, having taught her votary to forsake sin, and to renounce all communication with sinners, now gives place to faith, which appears with the glad tidings of pardon and acceptance, causing the penitent to rejoice in God his Saviour, with joy unspeakable; and inspiring his heart with vigour and resolution to run his course in the way of righteousness. Risen to newness of life, he defies the malice, and predicts the final overthrow, of his spiritual adversaries.

10. *Let all mine enemies, or, all mine enemies shall, be ashamed, and sore vexed: let them, or, they shall return, and be ashamed suddenly.*

Many of the mournful Psalms end in this manner, to instruct the believer, that he is continually to look forward, and solace himself with beholding that day, when his warfare shall be accomplished when sin and sorrow shall be no more; when sudden and everlasting confusion shall cover the enemies of righteousness; when the sackcloth of the penitent shall be exchanged for a robe of glory and every tear become a sparkling gem in his crown; when to sighs and groans shall succeed the songs of heaven, set to angelic harps, and faith shall be resolved into the vision of the Almighty.

PSALM VII.

ARGUMENT.—David is said to have composed this Psalm concerning the words, or the matter, of Cush the Benjaminite. Whether Saul, or Shimei, or any one else, be intended under

this name, it is sufficiently clear, that David had been maliciously aspersed and calumniated by such a person ; that the Psalm was written to vindicate himself from the imputation, whatever was the nature of it ; and, consequently, may be considered as the appeal of the true David and his disciples, against the grand Accuser and his associates. The person speaking, 1, 2. declares his trust to be in God ; 3—5. protests his innocence ; 6—8. desires that judgment may be given in the cause ; 9, 10. prays for the abolition of sin, and the full establishment of righteousness ; 11—13. sets forth the divine judgments against sinners ; 14—16. describes the beginning, progress, and end, of sin, with, 17. the joy and triumph of the faithful.

1. O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust ; save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me :

To a tender and ingenuous spirit, the ‘ persecution’ of the tongue is worse than that of the sword, and with more difficulty submitted to ; as indeed a good name is more precious than bodily life. Believers in every age have been persecuted in this way ; and the King of saints often mentions it as one of the bitterest ingredients in his cup of sorrows. Faith and prayer are the arms with which this formidable temptation must be encountered, and may be overcome. The former assures us, that God can ‘ save and deliver’ us from it ; the latter induces him so to do.

2. Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.

The ‘ lion’ of whom David stood in fear, was probably Saul, roused, by a false accusation, to destroy him. The rage of tyrants is often in the same manner excited against the church. And we all have reason to dread the fury of one who is ‘ the

roaring lion,' as well as the 'accuser of the brethren.' From him none can deliver us, but God only.

3. *O Lord my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;*

David makes a solemn appeal to God, searcher of all hearts, to judge of his innocence with regard to the particular crime laid to charge. Any person, when slandered, may do the same. But Christ only could call upon Heaven to attest his universal uprightness. In his 'bath' there was 'no iniquity'; all his works were wrought in perfect righteousness; and when the prince of this world came to try and explore him, he found nothing whereof justly to accuse him. The vessel was thoroughly shaken, but the liquor in it continued pure.

4. *If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me: yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:*

David probably alludes to the life of Saul, who was twice preserved by him, when he had been pressed by his attendants to embrace the opportunity of taking it away. See 1 Sam. xxiv. xx. Of the Son of David, St. Paul says, 'In this he commended his love to us, that when we were sinners, he died for us:' Rom. v. 8. In so exalted a sense did he 'deliver him that without cause was his enemy.' Wretched they who persecute the benefactor; happy he who can reflect, that he has been a benefactor to his persecutors.

5. *Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it*

yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust.

These are the evils which David imprecates on himself, if he were such as his adversaries represented him ; persecution, apprehension, death, and disgrace. Christ, for our sakes, submitting to the imputation of guilt, suffered all these ; but, being innocent in himself, he triumphed over them all ; he was raised and released, glorified and adored ; he pursued and overtook his enemies, he conquered the conquerors, and trampled them under his feet ; and he enableth us, through grace, to do the same.

6. Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies ; and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.

To a protestation of innocence succeeds a prayer for judgment upon the case, which is formed on these two considerations ; first, the unreasonable and unrelenting fury of the persecutors ; secondly, the justice which God has ‘commanded’ others to execute, and which therefore he himself will doubtless execute upon such occasions. How did he ‘awake,’ and ‘arise,’ and ‘lift up himself to judgment’ on the behalf of his Anointed, in the day of the resurrection of Jesus, and the subsequent confusion of his enemies ! And let injured innocence ever comfort itself with the remembrance of another day to come, when every earth-born cloud being removed, it shall dazzle its oppressors with a lustre far superior to that of the noon-day sun.

7. So shall the congregation of the people compass

thee about : for their sakes therefore return thou on high.

The meaning is, that a visible display of God's righteous judgment would induce multitudes who should behold, or hear of it, to adore and glorify him. For their sakes, therefore, as well as that of the sufferer, he is entreated to re-ascend the tribunal as formerly, and pronounce the wished-for sentence. Thus the determination of the cause between Jesus and his adversaries, by his resurrection, and 'return on high,' brought 'the congregation of the nations' around him, and effected the conversion of the world. Nor, in human affairs, does any thing more advance the reputation of a people among their neighbours, than an equitable sentence in the mouth of him who sitteth in judgment.

8. *The Lord shall judge the people : judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.*

Conscious of his 'righteousness' and 'integrity,' as to the matter in question, David desires to be judged by him who is to judge the world at the last day. How few, among Christians, have seriously and deliberately considered, whether the sentence of that day is likely to be in their favour! Yet, how many, with the utmost composure and self-complacency, repeat continually the words of this Psalm as well as those in the *Te Deum*, 'We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge!' Legal, or perfect righteousness and integrity, are peculiar to the Redeemer; but evangelical righteousness and integrity all must have, who would be saved.

9. Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: or, the wickedness of the wicked shall, &c.: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins. 10. My defence is of God, who saveth the upright in heart.

It is predicted, that wickedness will, in the end, be abolished, and the just immovably established, by Him who knoweth intimately the very thoughts and desires of both good and bad men, and will give to each their due reward. How can we doubt of this, when it has pleased God to afford so many examples and preludes to it, in his dispensations of old time? The righteous cause hath already triumphed in Christ: let us not doubt, but that it will do so in the church. Happy the man, whose hope is therefore in God, because ‘ he saveth the upright in heart.’

11. God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.

The sense seems to be, that there are daily instances in the world of God’s favour towards his people; as also of his displeasure against the ungodly, who are frequently visited by sore judgments, and taken away in their sins. In this light we should consider and regard all history, whether that of our own age and nation, or of any other.

12. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. 13. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

The sinner who is not converted by the vengeance inflicted on others, will himself at length be made an example of. The wrath of God may

be slow, but it is always sure. In thoughtless security man wantons and whiles away the precious hours; he knows not that every transgression sets a fresh edge on the sword, which is thus continually whetting for his destruction; nor considers that he is the mark of an archer who never errs and who, at this very instant, perhaps, has fitted to the string that arrow which is to pierce his soul with everlasting anguish.

14. Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

This is not to be understood as if ‘travail’ were previous to ‘conception.’ The first is a general expression, ‘Behold, he travaileth with iniquity: the latter part of the verse is more particular; as if it had been said, ‘and having conceived mischief,’ he ‘bringeth forth falsehood.’ When an evil thought is instilled into the heart of a man, then the seed of the wicked one is sown; by admitting, retaining, and cherishing the diabolical suggestion in his mind, he ‘conceiveth’ a purpose of ‘mischief;’ when that purpose is gradually formed and matured for the birth, he ‘travaileth with iniquity;’ at length, by carrying it into action, he ‘bringeth forth falsehood.’ The purity of the soul, like that of the body, from whence the image is borrowed, must be preserved by keeping out of the way of temptation.

15. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. 16. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.

All the world agrees to acknowledge the equity

of that sentence which inflicts upon the guilty the punishment intended by them for the innocent. No one pities the fate of a man buried in that pit which he had dug to receive his neighbour; or of him who owes his death-wound to the return of an arrow shot against heaven. Saul was overthrown by those Philistines whom he would have made the instruments of cutting off David. Haman was hanged on his own gallows. The Jews, who excited the Romans to crucify Christ, were themselves, by the Romans, crucified in crowds. Striking instances these of the vengeance to be one day executed on all tempters and persecutors of others; when men and angels shall lift up their voices, and cry out together, ‘Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy judgments.’

17. I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness; and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.

Whatever doubts may at present arise concerning the ways of God, let us rest assured that they will all receive a solution; and that the ‘righteousness’ of the great Judge, manifested in his final determinations, will be the subject of everlasting hallelujahs.

PSALM VIII.

ARGUMENT.—This is the first of those Psalms which the Church has appointed to be read on Ascension-day. It treats, as appears from Heb. ii. 6, &c. of the wonderful love of God, shown by the exaltation of our nature in Messiah, or the second Adam, to the right hand of the Majesty on high,

and by the subjection of all creatures to the word of his power.

1. *O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth ! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.*

The Prophet beholds in spirit the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow ; like St. Stephen afterward, he sees heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God ; the sight fills his heart with wonder, love, and devotion, which break forth in this address to ‘ Jehovah,’ as ‘ our Lord ;’ for such he is by the twofold right of creation and redemption, having made us, and purchased us. On both accounts, ‘ how excellent,’ how full of beauty and honour, is his name, diffused by the gospel through ‘ all the earth ! ’ But more especially do men and angels admire and adore him for the exaltation of his ‘ glory,’ the glory of the only begotten, high ‘ above the heavens,’ and all created nature, to the throne prepared for him before the foundation of the world.

2. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained, Heb. founded, or constituted strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*

This verse is cited by our Lord, Matt. xxi. 16, and applied to ‘ little children in the temple, crying Hosanna to the Son of David ! ’ which vexed and confounded his malignant adversaries. The import of the words, therefore, plainly is, that the praises of Messiah, celebrated in the church by his children, have in them a strength and power which

nothing can withstand ; they can abash infidelity, when at its greatest height, and strike hell itself dumb. In the citation made by our Lord, which the Evangelist gives from the Greek of the LXX., we read, ‘ thou hast perfected praise,’ which seems to be rather a paraphrase than a translation of the Hebrew, literally rendered by our translators, ‘ thou hast ordained strength.’

3. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained ; 4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man, that thou visitest him ?

At the time of inditing this Psalm, David is evidently supposed to have had before his eyes the heavens as they appear by night. He is struck with the awful magnificence of the wide-extended firmament, adorned by the moon walking in brightness, and rendered brilliant by the vivid lustre of a multitude of shining orbs, differing from each other in magnitude and splendour. And when, from surveying the beauty of heaven, with its glorious show, he turns to take a view of the creature man, he is still more affected by the mercy, than he had before been by the majesty, of the Lord ; since far less wonderful it is, that God should make such a world as this, than that He, who made such a world as this, should be ‘ mindful of man,’ in his fallen estate, and should ‘ visit’ human nature with his salvation.

5. For thou hast made him a little, or for a little while, lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. 6. Thou madest him to have

dominion over the works of thy hands : thou hast put all things under his feet.

On these two verses, with that preceding, St. Paul has left the following comment: ‘One in a certain place testifieth, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him ? or the son of man, that thou visitest him ? Thou madest him a little lower than [marg. a little while inferior to] the angels ; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands ; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.’ Heb. ii. 6, &c. See also 1 Cor. xv. 27.

7. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field ; 8. The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea.

Adam upon his creation was invested with sovereign dominion over the creatures, in words of the same import with these, Gen. i. 28 ; which are therefore here used, and the creatures particularised, to inform us, that what the first Adam lost by transgression, the second Adam regained by obedience. That ‘glory’ which was ‘set above the heavens,’ could not but be over all things on ‘the earth.’ And accordingly, we hear our Lord saying, after his resurrection, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth :’ Matt. xxviii. 18. Nor is it a speculation unpleasing, or unprofitable, to consider, that he who rules over the material world, is

Lord also of the intellectual, or spiritual creation, represented thereby. The souls of the faithful, lowly and harmless, are the sheep of his pasture; those who, like oxen, are strong to labour in the church, and who, by expounding the word of life, tread out the corn for the nourishment of the people, own him for their kind and beneficent Master; nay, tempers fierce and untractable as the wild beasts of the desert, are yet subject to his will; spirits of the angelic kind, that, like the bird of the air, traverse freely the superior region, move at his command! and those evil ones, whose habitation is in the deep abyss, even to the great Leviathan himself; all, all, are put under the feet of King Messiah; who, 'because he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, was therefore highly exalted, and had a name given him above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, whether of things in heaven, or things on earth, or things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' Phil. ii. 8, &c.

9. *O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!*

Let therefore the universal chorus of men and angels join their voices together, and make their sound to be heard as one, in honour of the Redeemer, evermore praising him, and saying, O Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, King of Righteousness, Peace, and Glory, King of kings, and Lord of lords, how excellent, how precious, how lovely, how great and glorious is thy Name, diffused over all the earth, for the salvation of thy chosen! Bles-

sing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. And let heaven and earth say, Amen.

PSALM IX.

Second Day.—Morning Prayer.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm consists of two parts, a thanksgiving, 1—12. and a prayer, 13—20. Upon what particular occasion it was composed, is not known; probably to celebrate the victories gained by David over the neighbouring nations, after God had exalted him to be King in Sion. See ver. 11. But most certainly the Psalm was intended for the use of the Christian Church; and she continually, by using it, 1, 2. declares her resolution to celebrate the praises of her God; since, 3, 4. her enemies were vanquished, and her cause was carried; 5, 6. the empire of Satan was subverted, and 7, 8. the kingdom of Christ established; 9, 10. affording to believers refuge and salvation. For all these blessings, 11. Christians are excited to praise their Redeemer, who, 12. forgets nothing that is done or suffered for his sake. 13, 14. The Church petitions for final deliverance from the world, and the evil thereof; 15, 16. building her hope upon the mercies already received, 17, 18. she foretels the destruction of the wicked; and, 19, 20. prays for the manifestation of God.

1. *I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvellous works.*

In this animated and exalted hymn, the church begins with declaring her resolution to ‘praise Jehovah,’ as the author of her salvation; and that, neither coldly, as if the salvation were little worth; nor partially, reserving a share of the glory of it to herself; but with the ‘whole heart,’ with an affection pure and flaming, like the holy fire upon the

altar. She is determined to ‘show forth’ to the world, for its conviction and conversion, ‘all his marvellous works,’ the most ‘marvellous’ of which are those wrought for, and in, the souls of men. Outward miracles strike more forcibly upon the senses; but they are introductory only to those internal operations, which they are intended to represent.

2. I will be glad and rejoice in thee ; I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

Christians are taught to be ‘glad and rejoice,’ not in abundance of wealth, or plenitude of power, not in the pleasures of sense, or the praise of men, but in God their Saviour; and their joy is as far superior to the joy of the worldly, as the object of the one is to that of the other. He who, with the spirit and the understanding, as well as with the voice, ‘sings praise to thy name, O most High,’ is employed as the angels are, and experiences a fore-taste of the delight they feel.

3. When mine enemies are driven back, they shall fall, or, they stumble or fall, and perish at thy presence.

The church begins to explain the subject of her joy, which is a victory over her ‘enemies,’ a victory not gained by herself, but by the ‘presence of God’ in the midst of her. The grand enemy of our salvation was first vanquished by Christ in the wilderness, and ‘driven back,’ with the words ‘Get thee behind me, Satan.’ The same blessed person afterwards completely triumphed over him upon the cross, when ‘the prince of this world was cast out.’ This is that great victory, which we cele-

brate in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, from generation to generation; and through faith in him who achieved it, we likewise are enabled to fight and to overcome.

4. For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right.

The same important transaction is here described in forensic, as before it was in military terms. Satan having got possession of mankind, might have pleaded his right to keep it, since by transgression they had left God, and sold themselves to him. But Christ, as the church's representative and advocate, made the satisfaction required, paid down the price of redemption, 'took the prey from the mighty,' and delivered the lawful captive: Isa. xlix. 24. Thus was our 'right and our cause maintained;' thus we were rescued from the oppressor, and he who 'sat on the throne judged righteous judgment.' Something of this sort may be supposed to pass, concerning each individual, between the Accuser of the brethren and the eternal Intercessor, in the court of heaven.

5. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

To the victory of Christ succeeded the overthrow of Satan's empire in the pagan world. 'The heathen were rebuked,' when, through the power of the Spirit, in those who preached the Gospel, men were convinced of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; 'the wicked were destroyed, and their name put out for ever,' when the Roman power became Christian, and the ancient idolatry

sunk, to rise no more.' A day is coming when all iniquity shall perish and be forgotten in like manner.

6. *O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end, or, The destructions of the enemy are completed to the utmost: and thou, O God, hast destroyed their cities, their memorial is perished with them!*¹

The Christian church, when repeating these words, may be supposed to take a retrospective view of the successive fall of those empires with their capital 'cities,' in which the 'enemy' had from time to time fixed his residence, and which had vexed and persecuted the people of God in different ages. Such were the Assyrian, or Babylonian, the Persian and the Grecian monarchies. All these vanished away, and came to nothing. Nay, the very 'memorial' of the stupendous Nineveh and Babylon is so 'perished with them,' that the place where they once stood is now no more to be found. The Roman empire was the last of the pagan persecuting powers; and when the church saw 'that' under her feet, well might she cry out, 'The destructions of the enemy are completed to the utmost!' How lovely will this song be, in the day when the last enemy shall be destroyed, and the world itself shall become what Babylon is at present! Next to the glory and triumph of that

¹ Bishop Lowth renders this verse to the same effect. 'Desolations have consumed the enemy for ever; and as to the cities which thou, O God, hast destroyed, their memory is perished with them.' See Merrick's Annotations on the Psalms, p. 9.

day, is the jubilee which the Christian celebrates, upon his conquest over the body of sin.

7. But the Lord shall endure for ever ; he hath prepared his throne for judgment. 8. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

In opposition to the transient nature of earthly kingdoms, the eternal duration of Messiah's kingdom is asserted ; as also its universality, extending over the whole 'world ;' together with the consummate rectitude of its administration. To him, as supreme judge in an unerring court of equity, lies an appeal from the unjust determinations here below : and by him in person shall every cause be reheard, when that court shall sit, and all nations shall be summoned to appear before it.

9. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

In the mean time, and until he returneth to judgment, the poor in spirit, the meek and lowly penitent, however 'oppressed in times of trouble,' by worldly and ungodly men, and by the frequent assaults of the wicked one, still finds a refuge in Jesus ; who renews his strength by fresh supplies of grace, arms him with faith and patience, and animates him with the hope of glory.

10. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee ; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

Therefore, they who 'know God's name,' that is, who are acquainted with, and have experienced,

his merciful nature and disposition, expressed in that name, will take no unlawful methods to escape affliction, nor 'put their trust' in any but 'him,' for deliverance; since a most undoubted truth (and, O what a comfortable truth!) it is, that 'thou, Lord Jesus, hast not forsaken,' nor ever wilt finally 'forsake, them that' sincerely and diligently, with their whole heart, 'seek' to 'thee' for help; as a child, upon apprehension of danger, flies to the arms of its tender and indulgent parent.

11. Sing praises to the Lord which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.

The church, having celebrated the power and the goodness of her Lord, exhorteth all her children to lift up their voices, and sing together, in full chorus, the praises of him whose tabernacle is in 'Zion,' who resides with men, upon the mountain of his holiness, and saith, 'Behold I am with you always, even to the end of the world.' And thus, not only among the people, but also to principalities and powers in heavenly places, will be 'declared' and made known by the voice of thanksgiving in the church, the manifold wisdom and mercy of God, in his 'doings' towards man. See Ephes. iii. 10.

12. When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them, and forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

An objection might be started to the so much extolled loving-kindness of God, namely, that in this world his faithful people are often afflicted and persecuted; nay, sometimes suffered to be killed all the day long, as sheep appointed to the slaugh-

ter. But this is obviated by the consideration, that all is not over, as wicked men may suppose, at death; that a strict 'inquisition' will be appointed hereafter, when the 'blood' of martyrs and the sufferings of confessors shall not be 'forgotten.' He remembereth 'them,' that is, those who seek him, mentioned verse 10; so that the exhortation to 'sing praises,' &c. ver 11, seems parenthetic.

13. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, consider the trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death.*

We are now come to the second part of the Psalm. The church, after having, in the former part, strengthened her faith by commemoration of the mighty works God had wrought for her, proceeds, in this, to pour forth a prayer for farther and final deliverance. She speaks, as still militant upon earth, still in an enemy's country, surrounded by them that hate her, and suffering much from them. To whom therefore should she address herself, but to him whose high prerogative it is, literally to 'raise from the gates of death;' to him who is, in every possible sense, 'the resurrection and the life?'

14. *That I may show forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.*

The members of the church militant despair of being able to 'show forth all God's praise,' till they become members of the church triumphant. There is a beautiful contrast between 'the gates of death,' in the preceding verse, and 'the gates of the daughter of Zion,' or the heavenly Jerusalem, in this:

the one leads down to the pit, the other up to the mount of God ; the one opens into perpetual darkness, the other into light eternal ; from the one proceeds nothing but what is evil, from the other nothing but what is good ; infernal spirits watch at the one, the other are unbarred by the hands of angels. What a blessing then is it, to be snatched from the former, and transported to the latter ! Who but must 'rejoice' in such 'salvation ?'

15. The heathen are sunk, or sink, down in the pit that they made ; in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. 16. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth ; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.

Faith beholds, as already executed, that righteous judgment, whereby wicked men and evil spirits will fall into the perdition which they had prepared for others, either openly by persecution, or more covertly by temptation. See Ps. vii. 15, 16.

17. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

All wickedness came originally with the wicked one from hell ; thither it will be again remitted, and they who hold on its side must accompany it on its return to that place of torment, there to be shut up for ever. The true state both of 'nations,' and the individuals of which they are composed, is to be estimated from one single circumstance, namely, whether in their doings they remember or 'forget God.' Remembrance of Him is the well-spring of virtue; forgetfulness of Him, the fountain of vice.

18. *For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.*

They who remember God shall infallibly be remembered by Him ; and let this be their anchor, in the most tempestuous seasons. The body of a martyr is buried in the earth ; and so is the root of the fairest flower ; but neither of them ‘perisheth for ever.’ Let but the winter pass and the spring return, and, lo, the faded and withered flower blooms ; the body sown in corruption, dis honour, and weakness, rises in incorruption, glory, and power.

19. *Arise, O Lord, let not men prevail; let the heathen be judged in thy sight.*

And now, the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; Arise, O Lord Jesus, from thy throne of glory, and come quickly ; ‘let not’ the ‘man’ of sin ‘prevail’ against thy church ; but let the long-depend ing cause between her and her adversaries, ‘be judged’ and finally determined ‘in thy sight.’

20. *Put them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themselves to be but men.*

Strange, that man, dust in his original, sinful by his fall, and continually reminded of both by every thing in him and about him, should yet stand in need of some sharp affliction, some severe visita tion from God, to bring him to the knowledge of himself, and make him feel, who, and what he is. But this is frequently the case ; and when it is, as there are wounds which cannot be healed without a previous application of caustics, mercy is neces sitated to begin her work with an infliction of judgment.

PSALM X.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm is, in the LXX., joined to the preceding, but, in the Hebrew, divided from it. The church, under persecution from the spirit of antichrist in the world, after, 1. an humble expostulation with her Lord, setteth down the marks whereby that spirit may be known; such as, 2. hatred of the faithful; 3. self-willedness and worldly-mindedness; 4. infidelity; 5, 6. profligacy and pride; 7. profaneness and perjury; 8—10. subtilty and treachery employed against the people of God; 11. security and presumption. From the persecutions of such a spirit the church, 12—15. prayeth earnestly to be delivered; and, 16—18. through faith, rejoiceth in tribulation.

1. *Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?*

During the conflict between the church and her adversaries, God is represented as one withdrawing to a distance, instead of affording succour; nay, as one concealing himself, so as not to be found by those who petitioned for aid, or counsel. To behold the righteous cause oppressed, and good men seemingly deserted by heaven, at a time when they most need its assistance, is apt to offend the weak, and oftentimes stagger those who are strong. It is indeed a sore trial, but intended to make us perfect in the practice of three most important duties, humility, resignation, and faith. That we may not faint under the severity of this discipline, let us ever bear in mind, that the beloved Son of the Father, the Son in whom he was well pleased, had once occasion to utter these words, ‘ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’

2. *The wicked in his pride doth persecute the*
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poor ; let them, or they shall, be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

Inconceivable is that malignant fury, with which a conceited infidel persecutes an humble believer, though that believer hath no otherwise offended him than by being such. And what wonder ? since it is a copy of the hatred which Satan bears to Christ. But the devices of the adversaries, like those of their leader, will end in their own eternal confusion.

3. For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous whom the Lord abhorreth.

The first part of this verse points out that alarming symptom of a reprobate mind, a disposition to exult and glory in those lusts, which are the shame and disgrace of human nature, whether the world or the flesh be their object. The latter clause is differently rendered, as implying either that 'the wicked blesseth the covetous, whom God abhorreth,' or that the 'wicked, being covetous or oppressive, blesseth himself and abhorreth God.' Either way, an oppressing, griping, worldly spirit is characterized, with its direct opposition to the spirit of God, which teaches, that sin is to be confessed with shame and sorrow ; that in God alone man is to make his boast ; and that it is more blessed to give, than to receive.

4. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God ; God is not in all his thoughts ; or, all his imaginations are, There is no God.

The counsels of heaven are not known by the wicked, because they are not sought after ; and

they are not sought after, because of a diabolical self-sufficiency, which, having taken possession of the heart, displays itself in the countenance, and reigns throughout the man. He wants no Prophet to teach him, no Priest to atone for him, no King to conduct him ; he needs neither a Christ to redeem, nor a Spirit to sanctify him : he believes no Providence, adores no Creator, and fears no Judge. Thus he lives a ‘stranger from the covenants of promise, and without God in the world.’ Ephes. ii. 12. O that this character now existed only in the Psalmist’s description ;

5. His ways are always grievous, or, corrupt; thy judgments are far above out of his sight; as for all his enemies, he puffeth at him.

As are a man’s principles, such will be his practices ; and if he hath not God in his thoughts, his course of life will be corrupt and abominable, his end, his means, and his motives being all wrong, and polluted with concupiscence. There would have been some chance of holding him by fear, but that is gone with his faith ; for no man can tremble at judgments in which he does not believe.

6. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved; for I shall never be in adversity.

Prosperity begets presumption ; and he who has been long accustomed to see his designs succeed, begins to think it impossible they should ever do otherwise. The long-suffering of God, instead of leading such an one to repentance, only hardens him in his iniquity. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, he thinks it

will not be executed at all. He vaunteth himself, therefore, [like the proud Chaldean monarch, in the Babylon which he hath erected, and fondly pronounceth it to be immortal. Such, it is too evident, are often the vain imaginations of triumphant wickedness.

7. His mouth is full of cursing, deceit, and fraud; under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

From the thoughts of the sinner's 'heart,' mentioned in the preceding verse, David goes on to describe the words of his 'mouth.' And here we may illustrate the character of antichrist, by setting that of Christ in opposition to it. The mouth of one poureth forth a torrent of curses and lies; from that of the other flowed a clear and copious stream of benediction and truth. Under the serpentine tongue of the former is a bag of mischief and vanity; but honey and milk were under the tongue of the latter, so pleasant and so nourishing to the spirits of men were all his communications.

8. He sitteth in the lurking-places of the villages; in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.

From 'words,' the description proceeds to 'actions.' And with regard to these, as the Son of God went publicly preaching through cities and villages to save men's lives, so this child of Satan lieth in ambush to destroy them, privily bringing into the church, and diffusing among the people, pestilent errors, and damnable heresies for that purpose.

9. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den;

he lieth in wait to catch the poor : he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.

The disciples of Jesus, like their blessed Master, are ever vigilant to catch men in the evangelical net, in order to draw them from the world to God ; the partisans of Satan, in imitation of their leader, are employed in watching from their lurking-places, the footsteps of the Christian pilgrim, that they may spring upon him in an unguarded moment, and draw him from God to the world, and from thence to the devil.

10. *He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.*

Our Lord, who is styled 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah,' became a 'Lamb,' for the salvation of mankind : but when his adversary at any time 'humbleth' himself, when the wolf appears in sheep's clothing, let the flock beware ; it is for their more effectual destruction. And if, allured by an outward show of moderation and benevolence, the simple ones shall venture themselves within his reach, they will soon find that his nature is disguised, but not altered.

11. *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten ; he hideth his face ; he will never see it.*

For the chastisement of his people, God often suffers the enemy to prevail and prosper, who then ridicules the faith and hope of the church, and solaces himself in the conceit, that if there be a God, he either knows not, or cares not what is done upon earth. These Epicurean notions, however absurd and unworthy of the Deity they may seem, do yet in some measure take possession of

every man's mind at the instant of his committing a sin ; since it is most certain, that, with a due impression of the divine omniscience upon his soul at the time, he would not commit it, for all that the tempter could offer him. But faith is apt to sleep, and then sin awakes.

12. *Arise, O Lord ; O God, lift up thine hand ; forget not the humble.* 13. *Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God ? He hath said in heart, Thou wilt not requite it.*

The church now prays, that Jehovah, in vindication of his own honour and attributes, would arise to judgment, and make bare his glorious arm for the defence of his elect, who cry day and night unto him. Thus would the insolence of the wicked one and his agents, founded on the divine forbearance, be repressed, and all the world would see, that God had not forgotten, but still, as ever, remembered and regarded the low estate of his hand-maid.

14. *Thou hast seen it, for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thine hand : the poor committeth himself unto thee ; thou art the helper of the fatherless.*

'The wicked,' above, 'saith in his heart, Thou wilt not requite it.' But the faithful are taught other things by the promises in Scripture, and the experience of unnumbered histories. They know assuredly, that God beholds all that travail and vexation which some inflict, and others sustain, upon the earth ; and that he will infallibly recompense to the former their deeds, to the latter their sufferings. Destitute should we be of every earthly

help, in the state of beggars and orphans, yet in him will we trust, who, as the father and protector of all such, saith unto every one of us, ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’

15. *Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.*

This may be either a prayer, or a prediction, implying that the time will come, when the power of Jehovah will dash in pieces that of the enemy, by the demolition either of sin or the sinner, until wickedness be come utterly to an end, and righteousness be established for ever in the kingdom of Messiah. And, lo,

16. *The Lord is King for ever and ever; the heathen are perished out of the land.*

Faith beholds the Lord Jesus, as already manifested in his glorious majesty, the kingdoms of this world become his, and the Canaanite no more in the land of promise. Each individual experiences in himself a happy prelude to this manifestation, when Christ rules in his heart by the Spirit, and every appetite and affection is obedient to the sceptre of his kingdom.

17. *Lord, thou hast heard, or, hearest, the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare, or thou preparest, their heart: thou wilt cause or, thou causest thine ear to hear.*

How many important and comforting truths have we here, in a few words! As, that the ‘humble’ and lowly, whatever they may suffer in the world, are the favourites of Jehovah: that he attends to the very ‘desires’ of their hearts: that

such hearts ‘prepared’ to prayer, are so many instruments strung and tuned by the hand of heaven : and that their prayer is as music, to which the Almighty himself listens with pleasure.

18. *To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.*

For the sake of the elect, and their prayers, the days of persecution and tribulation will be shortened ; the insolence of the earth-born oppressor, the man of sin, will be chastised ; the cause of the church will be heard at the tribunal of God ; and victory, triumph, and glory will be given unto her. In the foregoing exposition, regard has been chiefly had to the case of the church, and to her sufferings from the spirit of antichrist, in whomsoever existing and acting, from time to time, in the world ; this being judged the most generally useful application, which Christians as such, can make of the Psalm. Particular accommodations of it to the various oppressions of innocent poverty by iniquitous opulence, will meet the eye, and offer themselves at once to persons so circumstanced, for their support and comfort, under their respective afflictions ; which will be also not a little alleviated by the consideration, that the whole church of God groaneth with them, and travaileth in pain, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. Then, and not till then, tears shall cease to run down the cheeks of misery ; and sorrow and sighing shall fly away, to return no more for ever.

PSALM XI.

ARGUMENT.—The Psalmist, under persecution, 1—3. declareth himself resolved to trust in God alone, at a time when he was advised to fly to some place of refuge ; 4. he expresses his faith in the omniscience and overruling power of Jehovah ; 5. assigns the reason why good men are afflicted ; who, after that the wicked, 6. shall be destroyed, will appear to have been all along, 7. the favoured of God.

1. *In the Lord put I my trust ; how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain ?*

The Christian, like David, in perilous times, should make God his fortress, and continue doing his duty in his station ; he should not, at the instigation of those about him, like a poor, silly, timorous, inconstant bird, either fly for refuge to the devices of worldly wisdom, or desert his post, and retire into solitude, while he can serve the cause in which he is engaged. Nor indeed is there any ‘mountain’ on earth out of the reach of care and trouble. Temptations are everywhere ; and so is the grace of God.

2. *For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.*

These seem to be still the words of David’s friends, representing to him, as a motive for his flight, the extreme danger he was in from the ‘arrows’ of the enemy, already, as it were, fitted to the ‘string,’ and pointed at him ‘in secret,’ so that not knowing from whence they were to come, he could not guard against them. The Christian’s danger from the darts of the infernal archers, lying

in wait for his soul, is full as great as that of David. But 'the shield of faith' sufficeth, in both cases.

3. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

This likewise seems to be spoken by the same persons, discouraging David from making any farther resistance, by the consideration, that all was over; the 'foundations' of religion and law were subverted; and what could a man, engaged in the most 'righteous' designs, hope to 'do,' when that was the case? Such arguments are often urged by the timid, in similar circumstances; but they are fallacious; since all is not over, while there is a man left to reprove error, and bear testimony to the truth. And a man who does it with becoming spirit, may stop a prince, or senate, when in full career, and recover the day. But let us hear David's farther reply to his advisers.

4. The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

In the first verse, the Psalmist had declared his trust to be in Jehovah. After reciting the reasonings of his friends, he now proceeds to evince the fitness and propriety of such trust, notwithstanding the seemingly desperate situation of affairs. 'Jehovah is in his holy temple;' into which, therefore, unholy men, however triumphant in this world, can never enter: 'Jehovah's throne is in heaven;' and consequently superior to all power upon earth, which may be controlled and overruled by him in a moment; 'his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men;' so that no se-

cret wickedness can escape his knowledge, who scrutinizeth the hearts as well as the lives of all the sons of Adam. Why, then, should the man despair, who hath on his side holiness, omnipotence, and omniscience?

5. The Lord trieth the righteous; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.

As to the afflictions which persons may suffer, who are embarked in a righteous cause, they are intended to purge away the dross, and to refine them for the Master's use. 'Gold,' saith the son of Sirach, 'is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity ;' Eccl. ii. 5. In the meantime, God's displeasure against the wicked is ever the same, and their prosperity, instead of benefiting, will in the end destroy them. The cases of David and Saul, Christ and the Jews, the martyrs and their persecutors, are all cases in point, and should be often in our thoughts to teach us patience, and guard us against despair, in seasons of calamity, pain, or disgrace.

6. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, or, burning coals, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.

St. Jude, ver. 7, tells us, that the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, &c. for their abominable sins, 'προκεινται δειγμα, are set forth for an example, or specimen, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.' And here we see the images are plainly taken from the dreadful judgment inflicted on those cities, and transferred to the vengeance of the last day. Then the sons of faithful Abraham shall behold a prospect, like that which once presented itself to

the eyes of their father ; when, rising early in the morning, and looking toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, he ‘ beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace ! ’ Gen. xix. 28. Such must be ‘ the portion of their cup,’ who have dashed from them the cup of salvation. He, therefore, who would enjoy the prosperity of the wicked here, must take with it their torment hereafter ; as he who is ambitious of wearing the crown of righteousness in heaven, must be content to endure tribulation upon earth.

7. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness ; his countenance doth behold the upright.

He who is in himself essential righteousness, cannot but love his own resemblance, wrought in the faithful by his good Spirit ; with a countenance full of paternal affection, he beholds, and speaks peace and comfort to them, in the midst of their sorrows ; until, admitted through mercy, to the glory, from which justice excludes the wicked, and beholding that countenance which has always beheld them, they shall enter upon a life of boundless and everlasting felicity.

PSALM XII.

Second Day.—Evening Prayer.

ARGUMENT.—The church, through David, 1, 2. laments the decrease of God’s faithful servants, and the universal corruption among men, but 3—5. rests upon the divine promises, the truth and certainty of which, 6, 7. she celebrates,

and comforts herself therewith, while in a world where often-times, 8. the wicked walk uncontrolled.

1. *Help, Heb. Save, Lord, for the godly man
weareth; for the faithful fail from among the chil-
dren of men.*

Our Lord foretels, that in the latter days, ‘ because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold ;’ and seems to question whether, ‘ when the Son of man cometh, he shall find faith upon the earth.’ The universal depravity of Jew and Gentile caused the church, of old, to pray earnestly for the first advent of Christ ; and a like depravity among those who call themselves Christians, may induce her to pray no less earnestly for his appearance the second time unto salvation. It is frequently a benefit to be destitute of help from man, both as it puts us upon seeking it from God, and inclines him to grant it, when we do seek.

2. *They speak vanity, or, a lie, every one with his
neighbour : with flattering lips, and with a double
heart do they speak.*

When men cease to be faithful to their God, he who expects to find them so to each other, will be much disappointed. The primitive sincerity will accompany the primitive piety in her flight from the earth ; and then interest will succeed conscience in the regulation of human conduct, till one man cannot trust another farther than he holds him by that tie. Hence, by the way, it is, that although many are infidels themselves, yet few choose to have their families and dependants such ; as judging, and rightly judging, that true Christians are the only persons to be depended on, for the exact discharge of social duties.

3. The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things : 4. Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail, our lips are our own : who is lord over us ?

They who take pleasure in deceiving others, will at the last find themselves most of all deceived, when the Sun of truth, by the brightness of his rising, shall at once detect and consume hypocrisy. And as to men of another stamp, who speak great swelling words of vanity ; who vaunt themselves in the arm of flesh, thinking to prevail by human wit, or human power ; equally deplorable will be their case, when the Lord God ‘ omnipotent ’ reigneth.

5. For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

For the consolation of the afflicted and poor in spirit, Jehovah is here introduced promising, out of compassion to their sufferings, to ‘ arise, and set them in safety,’ or place them in a state of salvation. Such all along has been his promise to the church, who, by looking back to the deliverances wrought of old for the servants of God, and, above all, to that wrought for the Son of God, is now encouraged to look forward, and expect her final redemption from the scorn and insolence of infidelity.

6. The words of the Lord are pure words ; as silver tried in a furnace, or, crucible of earth, purified seven times.

The church rejoices in the promises of God her Saviour, because they are such as she can confide in. His words are not like those of deceitful boasting man, but true and righteous altogether. Often

have they been put to the test, in the trials of the faithful, like silver committed to the furnace, in an earthen crucible; but, like silver in its most refined and exalted purity, found to contain no dross of imperfection, no alloy of fallibility in them. The words of Jehovah are holy in his precepts, just in his laws, gracious in his promises, significant in his institutions, true in his narrations, and infallible in his predictions. What are the thousands of gold and silver, compared to the treasures of the sacred page!

7. *Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

As if it had been said, Yes, blessed Lord, what thou hast promised shall surely be performed, since there is with thee no variableness, nor shadow of turning: thou wilt keep thy poor and lowly servants, as thou hast promised, from being circumvented by treachery, or crushed by power; thou wilt preserve them undefiled amidst an evil and adulterous generation; thou wilt be with thy church to the end of the world, and then admit her to be with thee for ever.

8. *The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.*

While the faithful repose, as they ought to do, an unlimited confidence in God's promises, they have, in the meantime, but too much reason to mourn the prevalence of wickedness, stalking, like its author, to and fro, and up and down in the earth, uncontrolled by those who bear the sword, but who either blunt its edge, or turn it the wrong way. Such is often the state of things here below;

and a reflection, made upon the subject by our Lord, when his enemies drew near to apprehend him, may satisfy us how it comes to be so: ‘It is your hour, and the power of darkness.’ But that hour will quickly pass with us, as it did with him, and the power of darkness will be overthrown; the Lord will be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended.

PSALM XIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm contains, 1, 2. a complaint of desertion; 3, 4. a prayer for the divine assistance; 5, 6. an act of faith and thanksgiving.

1. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?*

While God permits his servants to continue under affliction, he is said, after the manner of men, to have ‘forgotten, and hid his face from them.’ For the use, therefore, of persons in such circumstances, is this Psalm intended; and, consequently, it suits the different cases of the church universal, languishing for the advent of our Lord to deliver her from this evil world; of any particular church, in time of persecution; and of each individual, when harassed by temptations, or broken by sickness, pain, and sorrow. He who bore our sins, and carried our sorrows, may likewise be presumed to have made it a part of his devotions in the day of trouble.

2. *How long shall I take counsel in my soul, hav-*

ing sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

To excite compassion, and prevail for help from above, the petitioner mentions three aggravating circumstances of his misery : the perplexity of his soul, not knowing which way to turn, or what course to take ; his heart-felt sorrow, uttering itself in sighs and groanings ; and the mortifying reflection, that his enemies were exulting in their conquest over him. All this will happen, and be particularly painful, to him who has yielded to temptation, and committed sin.

3. Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.

On the preceding considerations is founded a prayer to Jehovah, that he would no longer hide his face, but ' consider,' or, more literally, ' have respect to, favourably behold' his servant ; that he would ' hear, attend to, be mindful of' his supplication in distress. The deliverance requested is expressed figuratively, ' Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.' In time of sickness and grief, the ' eyes' are dull and heavy ; and they grow more and more so as death approaches, which closes them in darkness. On the other hand, health and joy render the organs of vision bright and sparkling, seeming, as it were, to impart ' light' to them from within. The words, therefore, may be fitly applied to a recovery of the body natural, and thence of the body politic, from their respective maladies. Nor do they less significantly describe the restoration of the soul to a state of spiritual health and holy joy, which will manifest themselves

in like manner, by ‘the eyes of the understanding being enlightened ;’ and in this case, the soul is saved from the sleep of sin, as the body is, in the other, from the sleep of death.

4. *Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.*

This argument we often find urged in prayer to God, that he should be pleased to work salvation for his people, lest his and their enemies should seem to triumph over him as well as them ; which would indeed have been the case, had Satan either seduced the true David to sin, or confined him in the grave. And certainly it should be a powerful motive to restrain us from transgression, when we consider, that as the conversion of a sinner brings glory to God, and causes joy among the angels of heaven ; so the fall of a believer disgraces the Gospel of Jesus, opens the mouths of the adversaries, and would produce joy, if such a thing could be, in hell itself.

5. *But I have trusted, or, I trust, in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice, or, rejoices, in thy salvation.*
6. *I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt, or, deals, bountifully with me.*

The heart which ‘trusteth in God’s mercy,’ shall alone ‘rejoice in his salvation,’ and celebrate by the tongue, in songs of praise, the loving kindness of the Lord. It is observable, that this and many other Psalms, with a mournful beginning, have a triumphant ending ; to show us the prevailing power of devotion, and to convince us of the certain return of prayer, sooner or later, bringing with it the

comforts of heaven, to revive and enrich our weary and barren spirits in the gloomy seasons of sorrow and temptation, like the dew descending by night upon the withered summit of an eastern mountain.

¶ PSALM XIV.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm is in a manner the same with the 53d. It sets forth, 1—3. the corruption of the world; 4—6. its enmity against the people of God; 7. the prophet longs and prays for salvation.

1. *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God: they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*

It does not appear upon what occasion David composed this Psalm. The revolt of Israel in Absalom's rebellion, is by most writers pitched upon as the subject of it. But, be this as it may, the expressions are general, and evidently designed to extend beyond a private interpretation. And accordingly, the apostle (Rom. iii. 10, &c.) produces some passages from it, to evince the apostacy of both Jews and Gentiles from their King and their God, and to prove them to be all under sin. In this light, therefore, we are to consider it, as characterizing the principles and practices of those who oppose the Gospel of Christ in all ages. ‘The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.’ Infidelity is the beginning of sin, folly the foundation of infidelity, and the heart the seat of both. ‘Their foolish heart (says St. Paul of the heathen, Rom. i. 21) was darkened.’ The sad consequence of defection in principle, is corruption in practice. ‘They

are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.' On these words the reader may see a full comment, Rom. i. 28—32.

2. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there was any that did understand, and seek God. 3. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy, or, putrefied : there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Like a watchman on the top of some lofty tower, God is represented as surveying, from his heavenly throne, the sons of Adam, and their proceedings upon the earth ; he scrutinizes them, and as it were searches diligently, to find among them a man of true wisdom, one whose heart was turned toward the Lord his God, one who was enquiring the way to salvation and glory, that he might walk therein. But as the result of this extensive and accurate survey, God informs his prophet, and commissions him to inform the world, that all had declined from the paths of wisdom and righteousness ; that the mass of humā nature was become putrid, requiring to be cleansed, and the vessels made up of it to be formed anew. Such is the Scripture account of man not having received grace, or having fallen from it ; of man without Christ, or in arms against him. See Rom. iii, 11, 12.

4.¹ Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.

The 'workers of iniquity,' work for the wages of death ; they fight against God and their own souls;

¹ Between the preceding verse and this are three others inserted in our common translation, which, though taken by St

they barter eternity for time, and part with happiness for misery, both in possession and reversion. Well therefore may it be asked, 'Have they no knowledge?' For common sense, after all, is what they want. They who, with an appetite keen as that to their food, prey upon the poor, and devour the people of God, will themselves be preyed upon and devoured by that roaring lion, whose agents for the present they are; and such as now 'call not on' the name of 'the Lord' Jesus for pardon and salvation, shall hereafter call in vain upon the rocks and mountains, to shelter them from his power and vengeance.

5. There were they in great fear; for God is in the generation of the righteous.

In the parallel place, Psal. liii. 5, after the words, 'There were they in great fear,' are added these, 'where no fear was,' which certainly connect better with what follows, 'for God is in the generation of the righteous.' David is supposed to be speaking primarily of Israel's defection from him to Ab salom, and here to be assigning the motive of that defection in many, namely, fear of the rebel's growing power, and distrust of his ability to protect them; which fear, he observes, was groundless, because his cause was the cause of God, who would not fail to appear in its support and vindication. The subjects of Christ, in times of persecution, are often tempted to renounce their allegiance, upon

Paul from other parts of Scripture, yet because (Rom. iii. 13) they followed the words cited from this Psalm, were probably added thereunto in this place by some transcribers of the copies of the LXX. For in other copies of the LXX. they exist not any more than in the Hebrew, Chaldee, or Syriac.

the same principle of fear ; although of them it may more emphatically be said, that they ‘ fear where no fear is, since God is in the generation of the righteous ;’ and they who are engaged on the side of Messiah, will, in the end, most assuredly be triumphant. The latter clause of this verse, in Psalm liii. runs thus : ‘ For God hath scattered, or, shall scatter, the bones of him that encampeth against thee ; thou hast, or shalt, put them to shame, because God hath despised them :’ the sense of which is evidently the same with—‘ God is in the generation of the righteous :’ he will defend them and overthrow their enemies : therefore let them not fear, neither let their hearts be troubled. If this interpretation be disapproved, the words, ‘ There were they in great fear,’ must be understood of the enemy ; and clause, ‘ where no fear was,’ must be rendered interrogatively thus, ‘ and was there not cause for them to fear ? ‘ since God is in the generation of the righteous, or, will scatter the bones of him that encampeth against thee,’ &c.

6. *Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge.*

This is plainly addressed to the adversaries, and charges them with reproaching and scoffing at that confidence in the Lord, expressed by the afflicted righteous, in the preceding verse.

7. *O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion ! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*

The consideration of the apostacy and corruption of mankind, described in this Psalm, makes

the Prophet express a longing desire for the salvation of Israel, which was to go forth out of Zion, and to bring back the people of God from that most dreadful of all captivities, the captivity under sin and death; a salvation, at which Jacob would indeed rejoice, and Israel be glad. And how doth the whole church, at this time, languish for the consummation of her felicity, looking, even until her eyes fail, for that glorious day of final redemption, when every believing heart shall exult, and all the sons of God shout aloud for joy!

PSALM XV.

Third Day.—Morning Prayer.

ARGUMENT.—This is one of the Psalms appointed to be used on Ascension-day. The Prophet, 1. inquires concerning the person, who should ascend into the hill, and dwell in the temple of Jehovah; 2—5. he receives, in answer to his question, a character of such person.

1. *Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*

The prophet alludes to the hill of Sion in the earthly Jerusalem, to the tabernacle of God which was thereon, and the character of the priest, who should officiate in that tabernacle. But all these were figures of a celestial Jerusalem, a spiritual Sion, a true tabernacle, and an eternal priest. To the great originals therefore we must transfer our ideas, and consider the inquiry as made after Him, who should fix his resting-place on the heavenly mount, and exercise his unchangeable priesthood

in the temple not made with hands. And since the disciples of this new and great High Priest become righteous in him, and are by the Spirit conformed to his image, the character which essentially and inherently belongs only to him, will derivatively belong to them also, who must follow his steps below, if they would reign with him above.

2. He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

The man, therefore, who would be a citizen of Zion, and there enter into the rest and joy of his Lord, must set that Lord always before him. Renewed through grace, endued with a lively faith, and an operative charity, he must consider and imitate the life of that blessed Person who walked amongst men, without partaking of their corruptions; who conversed unblameably with sinners; who could give this challenge to his inveterate enemies, ‘Which of you convinceth me of sin?’ in whom the grand accuser, when he came, ‘found nothing;’ who, being himself ‘the Truth,’ thought and spake of nothing else; making many promises, and performing them all.

3. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

Who, knowing the sins, follies, and infirmities of all mankind, made his tongue an instrument, not of disclosing and exasperating, but of covering and healing these sores in human nature; who, esteeming every son of Adam as his neighbour, went about doing good; and then laid down his life, and resigned his breath in prayer for his

murderers ; who, instead of taking up a reproach, and listening to the calumniator, cast him out, and silenced him, by erasing the hand-writing that was against us, and nailing the cancelled indictment to the cross ;

4. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned ; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord : he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

Who rejected the wicked, however rich and honourable ; and chose the well-inclined, however poor and contemptible in the world ; who having, by covenant with the Father, engaged to keep the law, and to taste death for every man, went willingly and steadily through this work, and surmounted every obstacle which could be thrown in his way, until he declared, concerning the task appointed him, ‘It is finished.’

5. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent.

Who was so far from desiring to amass the earthly mammon, that he would touch none of it ; and received the true riches, only that he might bestow them upon others ; who, instead of taking a reward against the innocent, died for the guilty ; and whose sentence, when he shall sit on the throne of judgment, will be equally impartial and immutable.

6. He that doeth these things, shall never be moved.

In the above comment, it was thought most advisable to open and display the full extent of what was both enjoined and forbidden, by exemplifying

each particular, as receiving its utmost completion, in the character and conduct of our blessed Lord. And whoever shall survey and copy these virtues and graces, as they present themselves in his life, will, it is humbly apprehended, take the best and shortest way to the heavenly Zion, and make that use of the fifteenth Psalm, which the Church may be supposed to have had in view, when she appointed it as one of the proper Psalms for Ascension-day.

PSALM XVI.

ARGUMENT.—Upon whatever occasion, or in whatever distress, David might compose this Psalm, we are taught by St. Peter and St. Paul, Acts, ii. 24. and xiii. 35. to consider him as speaking in the person of Christ our Lord, of whom alone the latter part of the Psalm is true. The contents are, 1. a prayer for support ; 2, 3. a declaration of love to the saints ; 4. a protestation against idolaters ; 5—8. acts of love, joy and confidence in Jehovah ; and 9—11. one of hope in an approaching resurrection and glorification.

1. *Preserve me, O God ; for in thee do I put my trust.*

These words are evidently spoken by one in great distress, who addresses himself to heaven for support under his sufferings, pleading his confidence in God, still unshaken by all the storms that had set themselves against it. This might be the case of David, and may be that of any believer. But since the Psalm is a continued speech without change of person, we may consider the whole as uttered by Him who only could utter the concluding verses, and who in this first verse makes his

supplication to the Father, for the promised and expected deliverance.

2. *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;* 3. *But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.*

In the Chaldee and Syriac, the latter clause of the former of these two verses is rendered—‘ My goodness is from thee.’ An ingenious writer thinks the Hebrew will bear this sense, in the elliptical way, thus—‘ My goodness; shall I mention that? By no means; it is all to be ascribed to thee.’ The goodness of man is all derived from God, and should be extended to his brethren. That of Messiah owed its original to his union with the Divinity; and promoted the salvation of those to whom it was communicated, that is to say, of those who thereby became ‘ the saints and excellent ones in the earth.’ For their sakes obedience was performed, and the propitiation made, by the Son of God, because he loved them with an everlasting love, and placed ‘ all his delight’ in making them happy. He rejoiced in ‘ the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.’ Prov. viii. 31.

4. *Their sorrow shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.*

Christ denounceth vengeance against those who should make to themselves other gods, run after other saviours, or suffer any creature to rival him in their affections; declaring of such, that their offerings should not be presented by him to the

Father, nor should they be partakers of the benefits of his intercession. Even the bloody sacrifices of the law, instituted for a time by God himself, became abomination to him when that time was expired, and the one great sacrifice had been offered upon the altar of the cross.

5. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot.* 6. *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.*

The true David, anointed to his everlasting kingdom, yet first a man of sorrows and a stranger upon earth, prefers the promised inheritance of the church, that spiritual kingdom, city, and temple of Jehovah, before all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; he is sure that Jehovah will maintain his lot, that he will both give and preserve to him this his patrimony; and therefore rejoices at the divine beauty and excellency of the heavenly Canaan. And hence the Christian learns wherein his duty and his happiness consist; namely, in making choice of God for 'the portion of his inheritance and of his cup,' for his support and for his delight; in preferring the spirit to the flesh, the church to the world, and eternity to time.

7. *I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*

The person speaking here blesses Jehovah for communicating that divine 'counsel,' that celestial wisdom, by which he was incited and enabled to make the foregoing choice and resolution. In the latter part of the verse is intimated the mode of these gracious and spiritual communications,

which in the dark seasons of adversity were conveyed to the inmost thoughts and affections of the mind, thereby to instruct, to comfort, and to strengthen the sufferer, until his passion should be accomplished, and the morning of the resurrection should dawn, in which, as we shall see, all his hope and confidence were placed.

8. *I have set the Lord always before me ; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

The method taken by Christ as man, to support himself in time of trouble, and persevere unto the end, was to maintain a constant actual sense of the presence of Jehovah, whom when he thus saw standing at his right hand, ready, at the appointed hour, to succour and deliver him, he then feared not the powers of earth and hell combined for his destruction. Why are our fears great, but because our faith is little ?

9. *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth ; my flesh also shall rest in hope.*

Through confidence in the almighty power engaged on his side, joy filled the heart of Christ, and rendered his tongue an instrument of giving glory to Jehovah in the midst of his sufferings ; because when they were ended, as they must soon be, his flesh was only to make its bed, and rest awhile, in the grave, after the labours of the day, in sure and certain hope of a speedy resurrection and glorification. This same consideration is to the afflicted, the sick, and the dying Christian, a never-failing source of comfort, an inexhaustible fountain of joy : sin and infidelity are the enemies, who would fill it with earth.

10. *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.*

It was a part of the covenant of grace, and promised by the mouth of God's prophets, that after the death of Messiah, his animal frame, וְנִ, should not continue, like those of other men, in the grave, בָּקָר, nor should corruption be permitted to seize on the body, by which all others were to be raised to incorruption and immortality. As members of Christ, this same promise and assurance is so far ours, that although our mortal part must see corruption, yet it shall not be finally left under the power of the enemy, but shall be raised again, and reunited to its old companion the soul, which exists, meanwhile, in secret and undiscerned regions, there waiting for the day when its Redeemer shall triumph over corruption, in his mystical, as he hath already done in his natural body.

11. *Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

The return of Christ from the grave is beautifully described by Jehovah 'showing,' or discovering to him a 'path of life,' leading through the valley of the shadow of death, and from that valley to the summit of the hill of Zion, or to the mount of God in heaven, on which he now sits enthroned. There exalted at the right hand of the Father, that human body, which expired on the cross, and slept in the sepulchre, lives and reigns, filled with delight, and encircled by glory incomprehensible and endless. Through this thy beloved Son and our dear Saviour, 'thou shalt show' us likewise, O Lord, 'the path of life;' thou shalt justify our

souls by thy grace now, and raise our bodies by thy power at the last day; when earthly sorrow shall terminate in heavenly joy, and momentary pain shall be rewarded with everlasting felicity.

PSALM XVII.

ARGUMENT.—The Psalmist, confiding in the justice of his cause, 1—4. prayeth for a hearing and decision of it; 5—9. he petitioneth for the divine guidance and protection; 10—12. he describeth the temper and behaviour of his enemies; 13, 14. beseecheth God to disappoint them, and to deliver him; he endeth with an act of faith.

1. *Hear the right, O Lord, or Hear, O righteous Lord, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.*

The righteousness of the judge, and the importunity and sincerity of the petitioner, are the arguments here urged for a speedy and favourable determination. Slander and calumny were the portion of David, and of a greater than David, till the righteous Lord manifested himself on their behalf. And shall not God, in like manner, judge and avenge the cause of ‘his own elect, who cry day and night unto him?’ ‘I tell you,’ saith Christ himself, ‘that he will avenge them speedily.’ Luke xviii. 8. ‘Men ought always to pray, therefore, and not to faint.’

2. *Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.*

A court of equity is ever sitting in heaven, to receive appeals from the wrongful decisions of men here below; and in that court a judge presides,

whose impartial hand holds the scales of justice even; whose unerring eye marks the least inclination of either; and from whose sentence innocence is therefore taught to expect redress.

3. Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shall find nothing: I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

The sufferer's heart condemns him not, and he has confidence towards God, to whom he applies as the proper judge, because the only witness, of his integrity. God had 'proved' not only his words and actions, but his 'heart,' which man could not do: God had 'visited,' observed, and explored him 'in the night,' when secrecy and solitude prompt the hypocrite to sin, and when the undisciplined imagination wanders abroad, like the bird of darkness, after forbidden objects: God had 'tried' him, as silver or gold, in the fiery furnace of adversity; and if there be any dross or scum in the metal, it will then rise to the top, and show itself; yet nothing appeared, not so much as the alloy of an intemperate word. Absolutely and universally this could only be true of the holy Jesus; however, through his grace, it may be true of some of his disciples in particular instances of crimes falsely laid to their charge. Let us pray that it may be true of us, whenever God shall please to prove and try us.

4. Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips, I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

The way to hold fast our integrity in time of

temptation is here pointed out. ‘Concerning the works of men,’ that is, such works as fallen, depraved man has recourse to when in distress, ‘by the word of thy lips,’ by treasuring up thy word in my heart, as the rule of my actions, and the guide of my life, ‘I have watched,’ observed, that is, in order to avoid, ‘the paths of the destroyer.’ This seems to be the literal construction, and to convey the full meaning of the verse, which contains exactly the same sentiment with that in Psalm cxix. 11. ‘Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.’ If the word either be not in the heart at all, or if it be not there in such a manner as to be ready at all times for use and application, the man is in danger, at every turn, of going astray.

5. Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

The word of God affords us direction, but the grace of God must enable us to follow its direction, and that grace must be obtained by prayer. The ‘paths of God’ are opposed to the ‘paths of the destroyer,’ the way of righteousness to that of sin. The image here is taken from one walking in a slippery path, for such is that of human life, by reason of temptations; so that the believer, especially if he be young, feeble, and inexperienced, has great need of a divine supporter in every step he takes.

6. I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, or, because thou hast heard me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.

The sweet experience of former deliverances giveth a comfortable assurance of protection in pre-

sent and future dangers; and this should cause us to fly for refuge at all times, by strong supplication and prayer, to him who is able and willing to save us from death.

7. *Show thy marvellous loving kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee, from those that rise up against them.*

This is an address to the ‘loving kindness,’ or mercy of God, which the Psalmist entreats him to display and magnify in his favour, since it was the promise, the delight, and the glory of Jehovah, to save those who believed and trusted in him. There are two ways of rendering the latter clause of this verse: either, ‘Thou who savest by thy right hand,’ &c. as our translation has it: or, ‘Thou that savest them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up at, or, against thy right hand,’ meaning the opposers of the divine counsels and dispensations: as in Zech. iii. 1, Satan is said to ‘stand at Joshua’s right hand,’ to obstruct the building of the temple.

8. *Keep me as the apple of the eye: hide me under the shadow of thy wings.* 9. *From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.*

He who has so fenced and guarded that precious and tender part, the pupil of the eye, and who has provided for the security of a young and helpless brood under the wings of their dam, is here entreated to extend the same providential care and parental love to the souls of his elect, equally exposed to danger, equally beset with enemies. Of his readiness so to do he elsewhere assureth us, under the same

exquisite imagery, Zech. ii. 8 : ‘ He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.’ Matt. xxiii. 37 : ‘ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings !’

10. *They are enclosed in their own fat ; with their mouth they speak proudly.*

The last argument made use of by the Psalmist, in his address to God, is the character of his adversaries. He begins with their ‘ pride,’ and its cause, ‘ fulness of bread,’ or high living. Dr. Hammond prefers the rendering which follows : ‘ They have shut up their mouth with fat ; they speak proudly.’ Either way the meaning plainly is, that pride is the child of plenty, begotten by self-indulgence, which hardens the hearts of men against the fear of God, and the love of their neighbours ; rendering them insensible to the judgments of the former, and the miseries of the latter. Let every man take care, that, by pampering the flesh, he do not raise up an enemy of this stamp against himself.

11. *They have now compassed us in our steps : they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.*

‘ They have compassed us in our steps ;’ that is, literally, Saul and his followers had watched, pursued, and at last hemmed in David and his men : ‘ They have set, or fixed their eyes’ upon us, בָּאַרְצָן לִנְטוּן, ‘ to lay us prostrate upon the earth,’ or finally to make an end of us. Such are our spiritual enemies ; such is their intention, and our danger.

12. *Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.*

The similitude of a lion, either roaring abroad in quest of his prey, or couching in secret, ready to spring upon it the moment it comes within his reach, is often employed by David, to describe the power and malice of his enemies. Christians cannot forget, that they likewise have an adversary of the same nature and character; one ever seeking whom, and contriving how, he may devour.

13. *Arise, O Lord, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:* 14. *From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.*

The Psalmist, having characterised those who pursued after him to take away his life, now entreats God to 'arise' or appear in his cause, to 'disappoint' or 'prevent' the enemy in his designs, and to 'cast him down,' to overthrow and subdue him. The next words may be thus rendered: 'Deliver my soul from the wicked by thy sword, from men by thy hand, O Lord, from the men of the world;' the expressions, 'sword' and 'hand of Jehovah,' being frequently used to denote his power and vengeance. The Hebrew מְחִילָה or 'mortals of the transitory world,' from whom David prays to be delivered, are said to be such as have 'their portion in this life,' such as, in our Saviour's language, 'have their reward' here, and are not to expect it hereafter; 'whose bellies thou fillest with thy hid treasure,' whom thou permittest to enjoy thy temporal blessings in abundance, to 'receive their good things' upon earth, and to 'fare sumptuously'

every day ; as if it were to convince us, in what estimation we ought to hold the world, when we see the largest shares of it dealt out to the most worthless of the sons of Adam : ‘ They are full of, or abound in children, and leave the residue of their substance to their babes ; ’ after living in plenty, perhaps to a good old age, they leave behind them a numerous and flourishing posterity, who inherit their estates, and go on, as their fathers did before them, without piety to God, or charity to the poor. From these men and their ways, we have all reason to say with David, ‘ Good Lord deliver us ! ’

15. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness : I shall [be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Instead of setting our affections on things below, the prophet instructs us, after his example, to place all our happiness in the vision of God, and in that righteousness which leads to it ; since the hour is coming, when we shall awake, and arise, after the divine similitude ; when we shall be like God, for we shall see him as he is, and by seeing him shall be changed into the same image : and then shall every desire be satisfied with the fulness of joy, with the exceeding abundance of unutterable glory.

PSALM XVIII.

Third Day.—Evening Prayer.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, as we are informed by the sacred history, 2 Sam. xxii. 1, was composed and sung by David, in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of

all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. It contains, ver. 1—3. an address of thanks to Jehovah; 4—6. a relation of sufferings undergone, and prayers made for assistance; 7—15. a magnificent description of the divine interposition in favour of the sufferer, and 16—19. of the deliverance wrought for him, 20—24. in consideration of his righteousness, 25—28. according to the tenour of God's equitable proceedings; 29—36. to Jehovah is ascribed the glory of the victory, which, 37—42. is represented as every way complete, by the destruction of all opponents, and, 43—45. the submission of the heathen; for these events, 46—50. God is blessed and praised. As the sublimity of the figures used in this Psalm, and the consent of ancient commentators, even Jewish as well as Christian, but above all, the citations made from it in the New Testament, do evince, that the kingdom of Messiah is here pointed out, under that of David, an application is therefore made of the whole, in the ensuing comment, to the sufferings, resurrection, righteousness, and conquests of Christ, to the destruction of the Jews, and conversion of the Gentiles. In a word, the Psalm, it is apprehended, should now be considered as a glorious epinikion, or triumphal hymn, to be sung by the church, risen and victorious in Christ her Head.

1. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.

Let us suppose king Messiah, like his illustrious progenitor of old, seated in peace and triumph upon the throne designed and prepared for him. From thence let us imagine him taking a retrospect view of the sufferings he had undergone, the battles he had fought, and the victories he had gained. With this idea duly impressed upon our minds, we shall be able, in some measure, to conceive the force of the words, ‘יְהוָה אֵלָי, with all the yearnings of affection: ‘I will love thee, O Jehovah, my strength, through my union with whom, I have finished my work, and am now exalted to praise thee, in the name of a redeemed world.’ Whenever we sing this Psalm, let us think we are singing it in con-

junction with our Saviour, newly risen from the dead ; a consideration which surely will incite us to do it with becoming gratitude and devotion.

2. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ; my God, my strength, in whom I trust ; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

In other words, explanatory of the figures here made use of, Through Jehovah it is, that I have stood immovable amidst a sea of temptations and afflictions ; he has supported me under my troubles, and delivered me out of them ; his protection has secured me, his power has broken and scattered mine enemies ; and by his mercy and truth am I now set up on high above them all.—How lovely these strains, in the mouth of the church militant ! How glorious will they be, when sung by the church triumphant ! It is observable, that the words, ‘in whom I trust,’ or, as the original has it, ‘I will trust in him,’ are referred to, in the margin of our English Bible, as quoted from this verse by St. Paul, Heb. ii. 13. If it be so, the reader, by turning to the place, may furnish himself with a demonstration, that in the eighteenth, as well as in the sixteenth Psalm, David speaks in the person of Christ.

3. I will, or, did, call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised ; so shall I be, or, so was I, saved from mine enemies.

As the Psalm so evidently throughout is a thanksgiving for past deliverances, the verbs in this verse seem to require the same rendering which is given to them below, at verse 6. Jehovah is to be

'called upon' both in adversity and in prosperity; in the former with the voice of prayer, in the latter with that of praise. 'Is any afflicted?' saith St. James, v. 13. 'Let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing Psalms.'

4. *The sorrows, or, cords, of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men, or, Belial, made me afraid.* 5. *The sorrows, or, cords, of hell, or, the grave, compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me.*

St. Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, says, when speaking of Christ—'Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it,' Acts ii. 24. "Now the Hebrew word **לְבָתָר**" (as Dr. Hammond well observes on that place) "signifies two things, a cord or band, and a pang, especially of women in travail; hence the LXX. meeting with the word, Ps. xviii. where it certainly signifies **χοινία**, cords, or bands, have yet rendered it **ωδινές**, pangs; and from their example here, St. Luke hath used **ταξ** **ωδινας** **θαυματου**, the pains or **pangs** of death; when both the addition of the word **λυσας**, *loosing*, and **κρατεισθαι**, being *holden fast*, do show the sense is *bands*, or *cords*." From the passage in the Acts, with this learned and judicious remark upon it, we obtain not only the true rendering of the phrase "**לְבָתָר** **טוֹת** **חַבֵּלִי** cords, or bands of death," but also something more than an intimation that, in the verses of our Psalm now before us, David speaks of Christ, that the 'cords of death,' those 'bands' due to our sins, 'compassed him about,' and the 'floods of Belial,' the powers of darkness and ungodliness, like an over-

whelming torrent breaking forth from the bottomless pit, ‘made him afraid,’ in the day of his agony, when the apprehensions of the bitter cup cast his soul into unutterable amazement, and he beheld himself environed by those ‘snares’ which had captivated and detained all the children of Adam. David, surrounded by Saul and his blood-thirsty attendants, was a lively emblem of the suffering Jesus, and therefore the same description is applicable to both ; as the words of the second Psalm, in like manner, celebrate the inauguration of the son of Jesse, and that of the Son of God.

6. *In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God : he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.*

David was in distress ; David called upon Jehovah, the God of Israel, who dwelt between the cherubim in the holy place ; and by him the prayer of David was heard. Much greater was the distress of Christ, who likewise, as St. Paul speaks, ‘in the days of his flesh offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard ;’ Heb. v. 7 ; his voice ascended to the eternal temple, his powerful cry pierced the ears of the Father everlasting, and brought salvation from heaven at the time appointed. The church also is distressed upon the earth, she crieth, her cries are heard, and will be answered in the day of God.

7. *Then the earth shook and trembled ; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.*

At this verse the prophet begins to describe the manifestation of divine power in favour of the righteous sufferer. The imagery employed is borrowed from Mount Sinai, and those circumstances which attended the delivery of the law from thence. When a monarch is angry, and prepares for war, his whole kingdom is instantly in commotion. Universal nature is here represented as feeling the effects of its Sovereign's displeasure, and all the visible elements are disordered. The earth shakes from its foundations, and all its rocks and mountains tremble before the majesty of their great Creator, when he ariseth in judgment. This was really the case at the resurrection of our Lord from the dead; when, as the evangelist informs us, 'there was a great earthquake,' and the grave owned its inability any longer to detain the blessed body, which had been committed, for a season, to its custody. And what happened at the resurrection of Jesus, should remind us of what shall happen, when the earth shall tremble, and the dead shall be raised, at the last day.

8. *There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it: or, fire out of his mouth devoured, with burning coals from before him.*

The further effects of God's indignation are represented by those of fire, which is the most terrible of the created elements, burning and consuming all before it, scorching the ground, and causing the mountains to smoke. Under this appearance God descended on the top of Sinai: thus he visited the cities of the plain; and thus he is to come at the end of time. Whenever therefore

he is described as showing forth his power and vengeance for the salvation of his chosen, and the discomfiture of his enemies, a ‘devouring fire’ is the emblem made choice of, to convey proper ideas of such his manifestations. And from hence we may conceive the heat of his wrath against the adversaries of man’s salvation, when, by raising his Son Jesus from the dead, he blasted their schemes, and withered all their strength.

9. *He bowed the heavens also, and came down : and darkness was under his feet.* 10. *And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly ; yea, he did fly on the wings of the wind.* 11. *He made darkness his secret place ; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.*

Storms and tempests in the element of air are instruments of the divine displeasure, and are therefore selected as figures of it. When God descends from above, the clouds of heaven compose an awful and gloomy tabernacle, in the midst of which he is supposed to reside : the reins of whirlwinds are in his hand, and he directs their impetuous course through the world ; the whole artillery of the aerial regions is at his command, to be by him employed against his enemies, in the day of battle and war.

12. *At the brightness that was before him, his thick clouds passed, hail-stones and coals of fire.* 13. *The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice ; hail-stones and coals of fire.* 14. *Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them ; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.*

The discharge of the celestial artillery upon the

adverse powers is here magnificently described. Terrible it was to them, as when lightnings and thunders, hail-stones and balls of fire, making their way through the dark clouds which contain them, strike terror and dismay into the hearts of men. Such is the ‘voice,’ and such are the ‘arrows’ of the Lord Almighty, wherewith he ‘discomfeth’ all who oppose the execution of his counsels, and obstruct the salvation of his chosen. Every display and description of this sort, and indeed every thunder-storm which we behold, should remind us of that exhibition of power and vengeance, which is hereafter to accompany the general resurrection.

15. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

As the former part of the Psalmist’s description was taken from the appearance on Mount Sinai, so this latter part seems evidently to allude to what passed at the Red Sea, when by the breath of God the waters were divided, the depths were discovered, and Israel was conducted in safety through them. By that event was prefigured the salvation of the church universal, through the death and resurrection of Christ, who descended into the lower parts of the earth, and from thence reascended to light and life. The fourteenth chapter of Exodus, which relates the passage of Israel through the Red Sea, is therefore appointed as one of the proper lessons on Easter-day. And thus we obtain the ideas intended to be conveyed in this sublime but difficult verse, together with their application to the grand

deliverance of the true David, in the day of God's power. Indeed, it is not easy to accommodate to any part of the history of the son of Jesse those awful, majestic, and stupendous images, which are made use of throughout this whole description of the divine manifestation, from verse 7. But, however this be, most certainly every part of so solemn a scene of terrors forbids us to doubt but that a 'greater than David is here ;' since creation scarce affords colours brighter and stronger than those here employed, wherewith to paint the appearance of Jehovah at the day of final redemption.

16. *He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many, or, the great waters.* 17. *He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me : for they were too strong for me.*

For this purpose did God in so wonderful a manner display his power and glory, that he might deliver the sufferer out of his troubles. This deliverance is first expressed metaphorically, by 'drawing him out of the great waters,' and then plainly, 'he delivered me from my strong enemy,' &c. 'The great waters,' in ver. 16, are the same with 'the floods of the ungodly,' in ver. 4. By these was Messiah, like David, oppressed and overwhelmed for a time ; but, like David, he arose at length superior to them all. The 'strong enemy' was obliged to give way to a 'stronger than he, who overcame him, and took from his armour in which he trusted, and divided the spoil :' Luke, xi. 22.

18. *They prevented me in the day of my calamity ; but the Lord was my stay.* 19. *He brought me*

forth also into a large place : he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

The divine mercy is celebrated again and again through this sacred hymn, in a variety of expressions. Innumerable foes ‘ prevented,’ that is, surrounded, enclosed Christ on all sides, ‘ in the day of his calamity,’ when the powers of earth and hell set themselves in array against him ; but ‘ Jehovah was his stay ;’ on him he reposed an unshaken confidence : Jehovah therefore supported his steps, and led him on to victory and triumph ; from the narrow confines of the grave he translated him to unbounded empire, because he was the son of his love, in whom he delighted.

20. *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness ; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.* 21. *For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.* 22. *For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.* 23. *I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity, or, from iniquities.* 24. *Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eye-sight.*

Commentators have been much perplexed to account for these unlimited claims to righteousness made by David, and that, long after the matter of Uriah, and towards the close of life. Certain indeed it is, that the expressions, considered as David’s, must be confined either to his steadfast adherence to the true worship in opposition to idolatry, or to his innocence with regard to some

particular crimes falsely alleged against him by his adversaries. But if the Psalm be prophetical, and sung by the victorious monarch in the person of king Messiah ; then do the verses now before us no less exactly than beautifully delineate that all-perfect righteousness wrought by the Redeemer, in consequence of which, he obtained deliverance for himself and his people. For 'his' righteousness' sake Jehovah was well pleased, and rewarded with everlasting felicity the unspotted purity of his works : 'he' performed an unsinning obedience to every part of the law, and swerved not from its line in a single instance : the rule was ever in his eye, and no temptation could induce him to deviate from its direction ; like the light, he passed through all things undefiled, and his garments were white as the lily ; therefore a glorious kingdom was given unto him, forasmuch as in him the piercing eye of heaven could discover no blemish at all.

25. With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright: 26. With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the foward thou wilt show thyself foward: Heb. *with the perverse thou wilt wrestle, or, strive.*

The reason is here assigned why God 'recompensed Messiah according to the cleanness of his hands,' namely, because he is just, in rendering to every one according to his works. He who is 'merciful' to his brethren shall obtain the divine mercy; he who is 'upright' in his dealings with others, will have justice done him by the great Judge, against his iniquitous oppressors; he who is 'pure' from deceit and hypocrisy in the service

of his God, shall experience in himself a faithful and exact performance of the promises which God hath made to such ; but the man that is ‘ froward,’ perverse, and rebellious, must expect to grapple with an arm which will either humble or destroy. See Levit. xxvi. 3, 4, &c. 23, 24, &c.; 1 Kings, viii. 32; Prov. iii. 34.

27. *For thou wilt save the afflicted, or, lowly, people : but wilt bring down high looks.*

‘ God resisteth the proud,’ saith an apostle, ‘ and giveth grace unto the humble :’ James, iv. 6. And, indeed, what is the covenant of grace, but a covenant to humble pride, and to exalt humility ; what was it, but the humility of Christ, that subdued the pride of Satan ; and on what does the salvation of every man depend, but on the issue of the contest between these two principles in his heart ?

28. *For thou wilt, or, dost, light my candle, or, lamp : the Lord my God will, or, does enlighten my darkness.*

An instance of God’s favour towards the lowly and afflicted was the salvation vouchsafed to the suffering Jesus, who, like David, after much tribulation and persecution, under which he sunk for a time, even so low as to the grave itself, was exalted to glory and honour. This change of condition is set forth by that of ‘ a lamp,’ from a state of extinction to one of illumination, darkness being a well-known emblem of sorrow and death, as light is the established symbol of life and joy. Remarkable are the words of the Chaldee paraphrast upon this verse, cited by Dr. Hammond :—“ Because thou shalt enlighten the lamp

of Israel, which is put out in the captivity, for thou art the author of the light of Israel ; the Lord my God shall lead me out of darkness into light, and shall make me see the consolation of the age which shall come to the just."

29. *For by thee I have run through, or, broken, a troop : and by my God have I leaped over a wall.*

Through the power of his divinity, the Captain of our salvation vanquished the host of darkness, and escaped from the sepulchre, notwithstanding all their precautions to confine him there. Vain is every effort, by whomsoever it is made, against the counsels of Omnipotence. And let us reflect, for our comfort, that they who could not prevent the resurrection of Christ, cannot detain the soul of a Christian in sin, or his body in the grave.

30. *As for God, his way is perfect : the word of the Lord is tried : he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*

The 'way' of God is in the course of his proceedings with men, and its 'perfection' consists in the equity of those proceedings ; the promises made in 'the word Jehovah' to his servants, are 'tried' in times of affliction and persecution, as gold in the fire, and found pure from any dross of deceit, or fallibility : he is ever a 'shield' to protect 'those who trust in him,' during their stay here, until he becomes their 'exceeding great reward' hereafter. All this he has been to the head, in order that he may be all this to the members of the church.

31. *For who is God, save the Lord ? Or who is a rock, save our God ?*

'Jehovah' alone is the 'God,' or covenanted Saviour of his people; he is the only 'rock,' on which they may securely build their hope of heaven. Vain were the idols of the ancient world, Baal and Jupiter; as vain are those of modern times, pleasure, honour, and profit. They cannot bestow content, or make their votaries happy below; much less can they deliver from death, or open the everlasting doors above.

32. *It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*

In this and the following verses are enumerated the gifts of God to the spiritual warrior, whereby he is armed and prepared for the battle, after the example of his victorious leader. God invests him with 'strength,' or what the apostle calls 'the spirit of might in the inner man,' as the loins of a soldier are braced by the military girdle; whence that of St. Paul, 'having your loins girt about with truth.' He removes every thing that may impede his progress, until he has accomplished his warfare, and finished his course in righteousness, which seems to be what is meant by 'making his way perfect.'

33. *He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.*

He endueth the affections, which are the feet of the soul, with vigour and agility, to run the way of his commandments, to surmount every obstacle, and, with an activity like that of the swift hart, or the bounding roe, to conquer the steep ascent of

he everlasting hills, and gain the summit of the heavenly mountain. St. Paul tells us how the feet must be shod, for this purpose, namely, ‘with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.’

34. He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

He communicates a wisdom and a power which nothing can withstand, instructing and enabling the combatant to overcome in the conflict, to seize and render useless the weapons of the adversary. St. Paul puts into the Christian warrior’s hand, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.’

35. Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness, or, thy afflictions, have made me great.

The salvation of God is a defence against all temptations, to such as believe in it; whence St. Paul styles this piece of armour, the shield of faith, ‘ wherewith,’ says he, ‘ ye may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil.’ The right hand’ of God must support and sustain us at all times; and the wholesome discipline of the Christian camp, the chastisements and corrections of our heavenly Father, must train us up to true greatness, and prepare us for the kingdom of heaven. The soldiers, like their great leader, must be made perfect through sufferings.’

36. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that, or, and, my feet did not slip.

In other words, God had opened a free course for him to victory and triumph, and had also en-

dued him with strength to run that course ; thus removing the two mischievous effects of sin, which not only precluded the way to heaven, but deprived us of the ability to travel in it.

37. I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them ; neither did I turn again till they were consumed. 38. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise : they are fallen under my feet.

If we suppose David in his conquests to have prefigured victorious Messiah, then have we, in these and the subsequent verses, a sublime description of that vengeance which Jesus, after his resurrection and ascension, inflicted on his hardened and impenitent enemies. His wrath ‘pursued’ and ‘overtook’ them, in the day of visitation ; nor did it return, till, like a devouring fire, it had ‘consumed’ the prey. The Jews were cast down, ‘not able to rise,’ or lift up themselves as a people, being crushed under the feet of the once-despised and insulted Nazarene. Let us reflect upon the impotence of our spiritual adversaries, when Jesus declares war against them ; and let us beseech him to conquer them in us, as he has conquered them for us.

39. For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle ; thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. 40. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies ; that I might destroy them that hate me.

With the almighty power of the Godhead was Jesus invested, by which all enemies were subdued unto him ; the stiff ‘necks’ of his crucifiers were bowed under him, and utter destruction became the

portion of those who hated him, and had ‘sent after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.’ So gird us thy soldiers and servants, O Lord Jesus, to the battle, and subdue under us, by the power of thy grace, those that rise up against us, whether they be our own corrupt desires, or the malicious spirits of darkness; so give us, like another Joshua, the ‘necks’ of these our enemies, that we may destroy them that hate, and would destroy us.

41. They cried, but there was none to save them ; even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.

Never was there a more just and lively portrait of the lamentable and desperate state of the Jews, when their calamities came upon them. ‘They cried, but—none to save !’ They had rejected him who alone could save, and who was now about to destroy them. They cried to Jehovah, and thought themselves still his favourite nation; but Jehovah and Jesus were one; so that after putting the latter from them, they could not retain the former on their side. ‘He answered them not !’ It was too late to knock when the door was shut; too late to cry for mercy when it was the time of justice. Let us knock while yet the door may be opened; and not begin to pray, when prayer shall be no longer heard.

42. Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind ; I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.

The nature of that judgment which was executed upon the Jews cannot be more accurately delineated than by the two images here made use

of. They were broken in pieces and dispersed over the face of the earth by the breath of God's displeasure, like 'dust before the wind; and as dirt in the streets, they were cast out,' to be trodden under foot by all nations. O that every nation would so consider, as to avoid their crime and their punishment !

43. Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people, and thou hast made me the head of the heathen : a people whom I have not known shall serve me.

If David was delivered from the strivings of the people; if the adjacent heathen nations were added to his kingdom, and a 'people whom he had not known, served him'; how much more was this the case of the Son of David, when he was 'delivered' by his resurrection, from the power of all his enemies; when he was made 'head of the heathen,' of whom, after their conversion, his church was, and, to this day is, composed; and when, instead of the rejected Jews, a people to whom before he had not been known, became his servants !

44. As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me : the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.

45. The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of the close places.

'As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me;' hereby is intimated the readiness with which the Gentiles should flow into the church, upon the preaching of the gospel to them, when the Jews, after having so long and so often heard it, had nailed Christ to the cross, and driven the apostles out from among them. 'The strangers shall sub-

mit themselves unto me ;' the nations who were 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise,' either cordially submitted to the sceptre of Christ, or at least dissembled their hostility, and yielded a feigned submission, (for so the word וְנִכְרֵת sometimes signifies;) 'the strangers shall fade away ;' that is, such of them as set themselves against me, shall find their strength blasted and withered as a leaf in autumn, and shall fall at the sound of my name and my victories ; 'they shall be afraid out of their close places ;' or rather, 'they shall come trembling from their strong holds,' as places not able to protect them, and therefore they will sue for peace. Such seems to be the import of these two verses, which therefore denote the conquest of Messiah to have been every way complete. And accordingly, in the remaining part of the Psalm, the church, through Christ her Head, blesseth Jehovah for the same.

46. *The Lord liveth ; and blessed be my rock ; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.* 47. *It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me.* 48. *He delivereth me from mine enemies : yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me ; thou hast delivered me from the violent man.*

In other words, 'And now, the Lord God omnipotent liveth and reigneth, for ever blessed and exalted, as the God of salvation : by whom I am avenged of those who persecuted me, and am advanced to empire ; my enemies are fallen, and my throne is established.' Thus we learn to trust in Jehovah without fear, when our enemies are vic-

torious, and to glorify him without reserve, when we are so.

49. *Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.*

Remarkable is the manner in which St. Paul cites this verse, Rom. xv. 9. The context runs thus: ‘Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy, as it is written, For this cause will I confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.’ This verse is by the apostle produced as a proof, that the Gentiles were one day to glorify God, for the mercy vouchsafed them by Jesus Christ. But, according to the letter of the passage, King David only says that he will give ‘thanks unto God among the heathen,’ on account of his own deliverance, and exaltation to the throne of Israel; for upon that occasion we know that he composed and sung the Psalm. This citation brought by St. Paul, cannot therefore be to the purpose for which it is brought, unless the Psalm have a double sense; unless God be glorified in it for the victory and enthronization of Christ, as well as for those of David; and this cannot be, unless the same words, which literally celebrate the one, do likewise prophetically celebrate the other; unless David be a figure of Christ, and speak in his person, and in that of his body, the church. While this Psalm is used as a Christian hymn, in the Gentile Christian church, David still continues, as he foresaw he should do,

‘to give thanks unto Jehovah, to glorify God among the Gentiles,’ for the mercies of redemption, and to ‘sing praises unto his name.’¹

50. Great deliverance giveth he to his king : and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.

‘Great deliverance giveth he to his king ;’ to king David, in saving him from Saul, and his other temporal enemies, and seating him on the earthly throne of Israel ; to King Messiah, in rescuing him from death and the grave, and exalting him to an heavenly throne, as head of the church : ‘and sheweth mercy to his anointed ;’ to him who was anointed outwardly, and in a figure, with oil ; and to him who was anointed inwardly, and in truth, with the Holy Ghost and with power : ‘to David, and to his seed for evermore ;’ to the literal David, and to his royal progeny, of whom, according to the flesh, Christ came ; and to Christ himself, the spiritual David, the beloved of God, with all those who, through faith, become his children, the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life.

Fourth Day.—Morning Prayer.

PSALM XIX.

ARGUMENT.—In the former part of this beautiful Psalm, ver. 1—6. the heavens are represented as the instructors of mankind ; the subject, the universality, and the manner of

¹ “ This verse is applied in Rom. xv. 9. to the calling of the Gentiles unto the faith of Christ, and praise unto God therefore. By which we are taught, that of Christ and his kingdom, this Psalm is chiefly intended.”—Ainsworth.

their instructions are pointed out; the glory, beauty, and powerful effects of the solar light are described. The latter part of the Psalm, 7—14. contains an encomium on the word of God, in which its properties are enumerated; and a prayer of the Psalmist for pardoning and restraining grace, and for the acceptance of these and all other his devotions and meditations. From a citation which St. Paul hath made of the 4th verse, it appears, that in the exposition, we are to raise our thoughts from things natural to things spiritual; we are to contemplate the publication of the gospel, the manifestation of the Light of Life, the Sun of Righteousness, and the efficacy of evangelical doctrine. In this view the ancients have considered the Psalm, and the church hath therefore appointed it to be read on Christmas-day.

1. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work.

Under the name of ‘heaven,’ or ‘the heavens,’ is comprehended that fluid mixture of light and air which is everywhere diffused about us; and to the influence of which are owing all the beauty and fruitfulness of the earth, all vegetable and animal life, and the various kinds of motion throughout the system of nature. By their manifold and beneficial operations, therefore, as well as by their beauty and magnificence, ‘the heavens declare the glory of God;’ they point Him out to us, who, in Scripture language, is styled ‘the glory of God;’ by whom themselves and all other things were made, and are upheld; and who is the author of every grace and blessing to the sons of men: ‘the firmament,’ or expansion of the celestial elements, wherever it extends, ‘sheweth his handy work,’ not only as the Creator, but likewise as the Redeemer of the world. And thus do the heavens afford inexhaustible matter for contemplation and devotion, to the philosopher and to the Christian.

2. Day unto day utterereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

The labours of these our instructors know no intermission, but they continue incessantly to lecture us in the science of divine wisdom. There is one glory of the sun, which shines forth by day; and there are other glories of the moon and of the stars, which become visible by night. And because day and night interchangeably divide the world between them, they are therefore represented as transmitting in succession, each to other, the task enjoined them, like the two parts of a choir, chanting forth alternately the praises of God. How does inanimate nature reproach us with our indolence and indevotion!

3. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.

Our translators, by the words inserted in a different character, have declared the sense of this passage to be, that there is no nation or language, whither the instruction diffused by the heavens doth not reach. But as the same thought is so fully expressed in the next verse, 'Their sound is gone out,' &c. it seems most advisable to adhere to the original, which runs literally thus: 'No speech, no words, their voice is not heard;' that is, although the heavens are thus appointed to teach, yet it is not by articulate sounds that they do it; they are not endowed, like man, with the faculty of speech; but they address themselves to the mind of the intelligent beholder in another way, and that, when understood, a no less forcible way, the way of picture or representation. So mani-

fold is the wisdom of God ; so various are the ways by which he communicates it to men.

4. *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*

The instruction which the heavens disperse abroad is universal as their substance, which extends itself in ‘lines,’ or rays, ‘over all the earth;’ by this means their ‘words,’ or rather, their ‘significant actions’ and operations, are everywhere present, even ‘to the ends of the world;’ and thereby they preach to all nations the power and wisdom, the mercy and loving kindness of the Lord. The apostles’ commission was the same with that of the heavens; and St. Paul (Rom. x. 18) has applied the natural images of this verse to the manifestation of the light of life, by the sermons of those who were sent forth for that purpose. He is speaking of those Jews who had not obeyed the gospel. ‘But I say,’ argues he, ‘have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.’ As if he had said, they must have heard, since the apostles were commanded not to turn unto the Gentiles, till they had published their glad tidings throughout Judea; but the knowledge of him is now become universal, and all flesh has seen the glory of the Lord; the light divine, like that in the heavens, has visited the whole world, as the prophet David foretold in the nineteenth Psalm. The apostle cannot be supposed to have made use

מִלְחָמָה—The verb **מִלַּל** (whence **מִלְחָמָה**) is used for expressing the meaning by signs. It has this sense Prov. vi. 13. **מִלְלָה בְּרֵנֶל**, speaking with his foot.

of this Scripture in a sense of accommodation only, because he cites it among other texts which he produces merely as prophecies. And if such be its meaning, if the heavens thus declare the glory of God, and this is the great lesson they are incessantly teaching; what other language do they speak than that their Lord is the representative of ours, the bright ruler in the natural world of the more glorious one in the spiritual, their sun of the ‘Sun of Righteousness?’ But of this the following verses will lead us to speak more particularly.

5. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

In the centre of the heavens there is a tent pitched by the Creator for the residence of that most glorious of inanimate substances, the solar light: from thence it issues with the beauty of a bridegroom, and the vigour of a champion, to run its course, and perform its operations. A tabernacle in like manner was prepared for him, who saith of himself, ‘I am the light of the world’: John, viii. 12. And as the light of the sun goes out in the morning with inconceivable activity, new and youthful in itself, and communicating life and gaiety to all things around it, like a bridegroom, in the marriage-garment, from his chamber to his nuptials; so, at his incarnation, did the Light Divine, the promised Bridegroom, visit his church, being clad himself, and clothing her, with that robe of righteousness which is styled, in holy Scripture, the marriage-garment; and the joy which his presence administered, was, like the benefits of it, universal.

And as the material light is always ready to run its heavenly race, daily issuing forth with renewed vigour, like an invincible champion still fresh to labour; so likewise did he rejoice to run his glorious race: he excelled in strength, and his works were great and marvellous; he triumphed over the powers of darkness; he shed abroad on all sides his bright beams upon his church; he became her deliverer, her protector and support; and showed himself able in every respect to accomplish for her the mighty task he had undertaken. What a marvellous instrument of the Most High is the sun at his rising, considered in this view!

6. His going forth is from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The light diffused on every side from its fountain, extendeth to the extremities of heaven, filling the whole circle of creation, penetrating even to the inmost substances of grosser bodies, and acting in and through all other matter, as the general cause of life and motion. Thus unbounded and efficacious, was the influence of the Sun of Righteousness, when he sent out his word, enlightening and enlivening all things by the glory of his grace. His celestial rays, like those of the sun, took their circuit round the earth; they went forth out of Judea into all parts of the habitable world, and there was no corner of it so remote as to be without the reach of their penetrating and healing power. ‘The Lord gave the word, great was the company of those that published it.’ Psalm lxviii. 11. It was the express declaration of our Saviour himself, ‘This gospel of the kingdom shall be

preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come : Matt. xxiv.

14. And St. Paul affirms, that the gospel was ‘come unto all the world, and had been preached to every creature under heaven :’ Col. i. 6, and 23. The prophet, therefore, having thus foretold the mission of the apostles, and the success of their ministry, proceeds in the next place, to describe their ‘doctrine ;’ so that what follows is a fine encomium upon the gospel, written with all the simplicity peculiar to the sacred language, and in a strain far surpassing the utmost efforts of human eloquence.

7. The law, or, doctrine, of the Lord is perfect, converting, or, restoring, the soul : the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The word of God, in this and the following verses, has several most valuable properties ascribed to it. It is perfectly well adapted, in every particular, to ‘convert,’ to restore, to bring back ‘the soul’ from error to truth, from sin to righteousness, from sickness to health, from death to life ; as it convinces of sin, it holds forth a Saviour ; it is a means of grace, and a rule of conduct. It giveth wisdom, and by wisdom stability, to those who might otherwise, through ignorance and weakness, be easily deceived and led astray ; ‘it is sure,’ certain and infallible in its directions and informations, ‘making wise the simple.’

8. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart : the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

To those who study the righteousness of God.

therein communicated to man, it becometh a never-failing source of consolation and holy joy; the conscience of the reader is cleansed by the blood, and rectified by the Spirit, of Christ; and such a conscience is a continual feast: ‘the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.’ The divine word resemblmeth the light in its brightness and purity, by which are unveiled and manifested to the eyes of the understanding, the wonderful works and dispensations of God, the state of man, the nature of sin, the way of salvation, the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell: ‘the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.’

9. *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.*

‘The fear of the Lord,’ which restrains from transgressing that law by which it is bred in the heart, is in its effect a preservative of mental purity, and in the duration both of its effect and its reward eternal; it ‘endureth for ever.’ ‘The judgments of the Lord are,’ not like those of men, oftentimes wrong and unjust, but all his determinations in his word are ‘truth and righteousness united’ in perfection.

10. *More to be desired are they than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb.*

What wonder is it, that this converting, instructing, exhilarating, enlightening, eternal, true, and righteous word, should be declared preferable to the riches of eastern kings, and sweeter to the soul of the pious believer, than the sweetest thing we

know of is to the bodily taste? How ready we are to acknowledge all this! Yet, the next hour perhaps, we part with the true riches to obtain the earthly mammon, and barter away the joys of the spirit for the gratifications of sense! Lord, give us affections towards thy word in some measure proportioned to its excellence; for we can never love too much what we can never admire enough.

11. *Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping them there is great reward.*

The Psalmist here bears his own testimony to the character above given of the divine word; as if he had said, The several parts of this perfect law, hereafter to be published to the whole race of mankind, have been all along my great instructors, and the only source of all the knowledge to which thy servant hath attained; and I am fully assured that the blessed fruit of them, when they are duly observed, and have their proper effect, is exceeding glorious, even eternal life.

12. *Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.*

The perfection and spirituality of God's law render it almost impossible for a fallen son of Adam even to know all the innumerable instances of his transgressing it. Add to which, that false principles and inveterate prejudices make us regard many things as innocent, and some things as laudable, which, in the eye of heaven, are far otherwise. Self-examination is a duty which few practise as they ought to do: and he who practises it best, will always have reason to conclude his particular

confessions with this general petition, ‘ Cleanse thou me from secret faults !’

13. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

In the preceding verse, David had implored God’s pardoning grace, to cleanse him from the secret sins of ignorance and infirmity : in this he begs his restraining grace, to keep him back from presumptuous sins, or sins committed knowingly, deliberately, and with a high hand, against the convictions and the remonstrances of conscience : he prays that such sins might not ‘ have dominion over him,’ or that he might not, by contracting evil habits, become the slave of an imperious lust, which might at length lead him on to ‘ the great transgression,’ to rebellion, and final apostacy from God ; for he who would be innocent from the ‘ great transgression,’ must beware of indulging himself in any.

14. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.

The prophet, having before solicited the justification of his person through grace, concludes with a petition for the acceptance of all his offerings, and more especially of these his meditations, at the hands of that Blessed One, whom he addresses as the author of all good, and the deliverer from all evil; as the ‘ strength’ and the ‘ Redeemer’ of his people !

¹ If the reader shall have received any pleasure from perusing the comment on the foregoing Psalm, especially the first

PSALM XX.

ARGUMENT.—1—4. The church prayeth for the prosperity of King Messiah, going forth to the battle, as her champion and deliverer; for his acceptance by the Father, and for the accomplishment of his will 5, 6, 7. She declareth her full assurance of faith, and her resolution to trust in him alone, and not in the arm of flesh. 8. She foreseeth the fall of her enemies, and her own exaltation; and, 9. concludeth with a prayer to the God of her strength.

1. *The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.*

This may be considered as the address of a people to their king, when he goeth forth to the battle against their enemies. But it is to be regarded in a more general and useful view, as the address of the church to Christ her King, in ‘the day of his trouble.’ She prayeth for the happy accomplishment of his warfare, ‘through the name of the God of Jacob,’ dwelling in him. And his warfare, though accomplished in his own person, still remaineth to be accomplished in his people, until the last enemy shall be destroyed, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. It is still ‘the day of trouble;’ still ‘the name of the God of Jacob’ must ‘defend’ the body of Christ.

part of it, he is to be informed, that he stands indebted on that account to a discourse entitled, *Christ the Light of the World*, published in the year 1750, by the late Rev. Mr. George Watson, for many years the dear companion and kind director of the author’s studies; in attending to whose agreeable and instructive conversation he has often passed whole days together, and shall always have reason to number them among the best spent days of his life; whose death he can never think of without lamenting it afresh; and to whose memory he embraces, with pleasure, *this opportunity to pay the tribute of a grateful heart.*

2. Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Sion.

All help and strength, in the time of danger and sorrow, must be obtained by prayer from the heavenly Sion which is in the Jerusalem above, and from the eternal temple thereon constructed. By this 'help and strength,' the Captain of our salvation conquered; and the church, with all her sons, must conquer through the same.

3. Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice.

As Christ, in the days of his flesh, offered up, not only prayers and tears, but, at length, his own most precious body and blood; the church here prays, that the great propitiatory sacrifice may be had in everlasting remembrance before God, and the merits of it be continually pleaded in arrest of judgment, and accepted for herself and her children.

4. Grant thee, according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.

The desire of Christ's heart, and the counsel of his will, was, that he might die for our sins, and rise again for our justification; that the gospel might be preached, the Gentiles called, the Jews converted, the dead raised, and the elect glorified. That this his 'desire might be granted,' and this his 'counsel be fulfilled,' the church of old prayed; and the church now prayeth for the accomplishment of that which yet remains to be accomplished.

5. We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the

name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfil all thy petitions.

The joy of the church is in the salvation of Christ; and the joy of every individual is in the application of that salvation to himself, and all around him. In the name of Jesus, and under the banner of the cross, the armies of the faithful undertake and carry on all their enterprises against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The prospect of the glorious fruits of Christ's victory caused the church to redouble her prayers, that he might be heard in his 'petitions' for mankind, and might see of the travail of his soul.

6. Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand.

The assurance of the ancient church was built on the prophecies going before concerning the salvation of Messiah. Our assurance is strengthened by the actual performance of so great a part of the counsel of God. We know that the Lord has 'saved his Anointed'; that his Anointed saveth all, who believe and obey him, from their sins; and therefore we doubt not but that, 'by the strength of his right hand,' or by the excellency of his power, he will finally save them from death, and rescue them from the grave.

7. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

This should be the resolution of every Christian king and people, in the day of battle. And, in the spiritual war in which we are all engaged, the first and necessary step to victory is, to renounce all

confidence in the wisdom and strength of nature and the world ; and to remember, that we can do nothing, but in the name, by the merits, through the power, and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and our God.

8. They are brought down and fallen ; but we are risen, and stand upright.

This was eminently the case, when the pride and power of Jewish infidelity and Pagan idolatry fell before the victorious sermons and lives of the humble believers in Jesus : this is the case in every conflict with our spiritual enemies, when we engage them in the name, the spirit, and the power of Christ ; and this will be the case at the last day, when the world, with the prince of it, shall be 'brought down, and fall ; but we, risen' from the dead through the resurrection of our Lord, shall 'stand upright' in the courts of heaven, and sing the praises of him who getteth us all our victories.

9. Save, Lord : let the king hear us when we call.

Thus the Psalm concludes, as it began, with a general 'Hosanna' of the church, praying for the prosperity and success of the then future Messiah, and for her own salvation in him, her King : who, from the grave and gate of death, was, for this end, to be exalted to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, that he might hear, and present to his Father, the prayers of his people, 'when they call upon him.'

PSALM XXI.

ARGUMENT.—This is one of the proper Psalms which the church hath appointed to be used on Ascension-day, and wherein, 1—6. she celebrates the victory of her Redeemer, and the glory consequent thereupon ; she prophesies, 7. the stability of his kingdom, and, 8—12. the destruction of the enemies thereof ; concluding with a prayer for his final triumph and exaltation ; the celebration of which, with everlasting hallelujahs, will be her employment in heaven.

*1. The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord ;
and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice !*

The joy of Christ himself, after his victory, is in the strength and salvation of Jehovah, manifested thereby. Such ought to be the joy of his disciples, when God hath enabled them to vanquish their enemies, either temporal or spiritual ; in which latter case, as they are called kings, and said to reign with Christ, so they are in duty bound to acknowledge that they reign by him : ‘ He that glorieth,’ whatever the occasion be, ‘ let him glory in the Lord.

*2. Thou hast given him his heart’s desire, and hast
not withholden the request of his lips.*

The desire of Christ’s heart was his own resurrection and exaltation, for the benefit of his church ; and now he ever liveth to make ‘ request with his lips,’ for the conversion and salvation of sinners. Such desires will be granted, and such requests will never be withholden. Let us be careful to frame ours after that all-perfect model of divine love.

3. For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness ; thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.

The Son of God could not be more ready to ask for the blessings of the divine goodness, than the Father was to give them : and his disposition is the same towards all his adopted sons. Christ, as king and priest, weareth a crown of glory, represented by the purest and most resplendent of metals, gold. He is pleased to esteem his saints, excelling in different virtues, as the rubies, the sapphires, and the emeralds which grace and adorn that crown. Who would not be ambitious of obtaining a place therein !

4. He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.

The life, asked by Christ, was not a continuance in this valley of tears, but that new and eternal life consequent upon a resurrection from the dead. For thus his petition was granted in ‘length of days for ever and ever.’ ‘He died no more ; death had no more dominion over him.’ Whose disciples then are they that wish only to have their days prolonged upon the earth, forgetful of the life which is hid with Christ in God ?

5. His glory is great in thy salvation : honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.

What tongue can express the ‘glory, honour, and majesty,’ with which the King of righteousness and peace was invested, upon his ascension ; when he took possession of the throne prepared for him, and received the homage of heaven and earth ! The sacred imagery in St. John’s Revelation sets

them before our eyes in such a manner, that no one can read the description, whose heart will not burn within him, through impatient desire to behold them. See Rev. chap. iv. vii. xix. xxi. xxii.

6. For thou hast made him most blessed, Heb. set him to be blessings,' for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.

Christ, by his death and passion, having removed the curse, became the fountain of all blessings to his people, in time and eternity; being himself the blessing promised to Abraham, and the object of the patriarchal benedictions. The joy communicated to the humanity of our Lord, from the divine nature, shall be shed abroad on all his saints, when admitted to view the 'countenance of God' in the face of Jesus Christ. Then they shall enter into 'the joy of their Lord.'

7. For the king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.

The throne of Christ, as a man, was erected and established, by his trust and confidence in the Father, during his humiliation and passion. Faith in God, therefore, is the way that leadeth to honour and stability. 'Look at the generations of old, and see: did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded?' Ecclus. ii. 10.

8. Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies; thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.

The same right hand of Jehovah is glorious in

¹ "Nam posuisti eum in secula benedicendum." Houbigant. Compare Gen. xii. 2. Bishop Lowth, in Merrick's Annotations.

power to save his people, and to destroy his enemies; to convert the Gentiles, and to crush the Jews; to exalt the faithful to heaven, and cast down the unbelieving to hell: neither is there any treason against the King of heaven, which shall not be dragged forth into the light, made manifest, judged, and condemned. Let thy hand, O Lord, be upon our sins to destroy them; but upon us, to save us.

9. *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.*

'The time of God's anger' often begins in this life, especially towards the close of it, when an evil conscience within, like flame confined in an 'oven,' torments the sinner, as a prelude to punishments future and unknown, which the 'wrath' of God is preparing to inflict on the incorrigible and impenitent. Let us so meditate on this sad scene, that we may have no part in it.

10. *Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.*

A day is coming, when all the 'fruits' of sin, brought forth by sinners, in their words, their writings, and their actions, shall be 'destroyed'; yea, the tree itself, which had produced them, shall be rooted up, and cast into the fire. The 'seed' and posterity of the wicked, if they continue in the way of their forefathers, will be punished like them. Let parents consider, that upon their principles and practices may depend the salvation or destruction of multitudes after them. The case of the Jews, daily before their eyes, should make them tremble.

11. *For they intended evil against thee; they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.*

Vengeance came upon the Jews to the uttermost, because of their intended malice against Christ. They, like Joseph's brethren, ‘thought evil against him;’ but ‘they were not able to perform it;’ ‘for God meant it unto good, to bring it to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.’ Gen. i. 20. So let all the designs of ungodly men against thy church, O Lord, through thy power of bringing good out of evil, turn to her advantage: and let all men be convinced, that no weapon formed against thee can prosper.

12. *Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, or, thou shalt set them as a butt, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.*

The judgments of God are called his ‘arrows,’ being, sharp, swift, sure, and deadly. What a dreadful situation, to be set as a mark, and ‘butt,’ at which these arrows are directed! View Jerusalem encompassed by the Roman armies without, and torn to pieces by the animosity of desperate and bloody factions within. No further commentary is requisite upon this verse. ‘Tremble, and repent,’ is the inference to be drawn by every Christian community under heaven, in which appear the symptoms of degeneracy and apostacy.

13. *Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength; so will we sing, and praise thy power.*

The church concludes with a joyful acclamation to her Redeemer, wishing for his ‘exaltation in his

own strength,' as God, who was to be abased in much weakness, as man. We still continue to wish and pray for his exaltation over sin, in the hearts of his people by grace, and finally over death, in their bodies, by his glorious power at the resurrection. The triumph over sin we sing in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, upon earth; that over death, we shall praise with everlasting hallelujahs, in heaven.

Fourth Day.—Evening Prayer.

PSALM XXII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, which the church hath appointed to be used on Good Friday, as our Lord uttered the first verse of it when hanging on the cross, consisteth of two parts. The former, 1—21. treateth of the passion; the latter, 22—31. celebrateth the resurrection of Jesus, with its effects. 1, 2. He complaineth of being forsaken; 3—6 acknowledgeth the holiness of the Father, and pleadeth the former deliverances of the church; 6—8. describeth his humiliation, with the taunts and reproaches of the Jews; 9—11. expresseth his faith, and prayeth for help; 12—18. particularizeth his sufferings; 19—21. repeateth his supplications; 22—25. declareth his resolution to praise the Father for his deliverance, and exhorteth his church to do the same; 26—31. prophesieth the conversion of the Gentile world to the faith and worship of the true God.

1. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

Christ, the beloved Son of the Father, when hanging on the cross, complained in these words, that he was deprived, for a time, of the divine pre-

sence and comforting influence, while he suffered for our sins. If the master thus underwent the trial of a spiritual desertion, why doth the disciple think it strange, unless the light of heaven shine continually upon his tabernacle? Let us comfort ourselves, in such circumstances, with the thought, that we are thereby conformed to the image of our dying Lord, that sun which set in a cloud, to arise without one.

2. O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hear-est not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

Even our Lord himself, as man, prayed, ‘that if it were possible, the cup might pass from him;’ but God had ordained otherwise, for his own glory, and for man’s salvation. ‘Day and night,’ in prosperity and adversity, living and dying, let us not be ‘silent,’ but cry for deliverance; always remembering to add, as Christ did, ‘Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.’ Nor let any man be impatient for the return of his prayers, since every petition preferred even by the Son of God himself was not granted.

3. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.¹

Whatever befalleth the members of the church, the head thereof here teacheth them to confess the justice and holiness of God in all his proceedings; and to acknowledge, that whether he exalteth or humbleth his people, he is to be praised and glorified by them.

¹ Or, perhaps, as Bishop Lowth renders it, ‘Thou, that inhabitest חַלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל, the irradiations, the glory of Israel.’ See Merrick’s Annotations on the Psalms, p. 43.

4. Our fathers trusted in thee : they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

'Trust' in God is the way to 'deliverance,' and the former instances of the divine favour are so many arguments why we should hope for the same; but it may not always be vouchsafed, when we expect it. The patriarchs and Israelites of old were often saved from their enemies: the holy Jesus is left to languish and expire under the malice of his. God knows what is proper for him to do, and for us to suffer; we know neither. This consideration is an anchor for the afflicted soul, sure and steadfast.

5. They cried unto thee, and were delivered : they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

No argument is of more force with God, than that which is founded upon an appeal to his darling attribute of mercy, and to the manifestation of it formerly made to persons in distress; for which reason it is here repeated, and dwelt upon. They who would obtain grace to help, in time of need, must 'cry' as well as 'trust.' The 'prayer of faith' is mighty with God, and (if we may use the expression) overcometh the Omnipotent.

6. But I am a worm, and no man ; a reproach of men, and despised by the people.

He who spareth all other men, spared not his own Son; he spared not him, that he might spare them. The Redeemer of the world scrupled not to compare himself, in his state of humiliation, to the lowest reptile which his own hand had formed, a 'worm,' humble, silent, innocent, overlooked, oppressed, and trodden under foot. Let the sight of this reptile teach us humility.

7, 8. All they that see me laugh me to scorn : they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying He trusted on the Lord, that he would deliver him ; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

This was literally fulfilled, when Messiah hung upon the cross, and the priests and elders used the very words that had been put into their mouths, by the spirit of prophecy, so long before. Matt. xxvii. 41—43. ‘The chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He trusted in God ; let him deliver him now, if he will have him.’ O the wisdom and foreknowledge of God ! the infatuation and blindness of man ! The same are too often the sentiments of those who live in times when the church and her righteous cause, with their advocates, are under the cloud of persecution, and seem to sink beneath the displeasure of the powers of the world. But such do not believe, or do not consider, that, in the Christian economy, death is followed by a resurrection, when it will appear, that God forsaketh not them that are his, but they are preserved for ever.

9, 10. But thou art he that took me out of the womb : thou didst make me hope, when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb : thou art my God from my mother's belly.

This was eminently the case of Christ, who was the Son of God in a sense in which no other man ever was. But in him we are all children of God by adoption; we are all in the hands of a gracious Providence from the womb; and into those hands must we commend ourselves, when about to depart hence. To whom else, then, should we have re-

course, for support and consolation, in the day of calamity and sorrow ?

11. *Be not far from me, for trouble is near ; for there is none to help.*

From the foregoing considerations, namely, from the holiness of God, ver. 3, from the salvation vouchsafed to the people of old time, ver. 4, 5, from the low estate to which Messiah was reduced, ver. 6, 7, 8, and from the watchful care of the Father over him, since his miraculous birth, ver. 9, 10, from all these considerations, he enforceth his petition for help, during his unparalleled sufferings, when ‘all forsook him, and fled.’ Let us treasure up these things in our hearts, against the hour when ‘trouble shall be near, and there shall be none to help ;’ when all shall forsake us, but God, our consciences, and our prayers.

12, 13. *Many bulls have compassed me : strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.*

From the eleventh verse to the nineteenth the sufferings of the holy Jesus are described, in terms partly figurative, and partly literal. A lamb, in the midst of wild ‘bulls and lions,’ is a very lively representation of his meekness and innocence, and of the noise and fury of his implacable enemies. ‘Bashan’ was a fertile country, Numb. xxxii. 4, and the cattle there fed, were fat and ‘strong.’ Deut. xxxii. 14. Like them the Jews, in that good land, ‘waxed fat and kicked,’ grew proud and rebelled ; ‘forsook God that made them, and lightly esteemed the rock of their salvation.’ Let both communities and individuals, when blessed with

peace, plenty, and prosperity in the world, take sometimes into consideration this flagrant instance of their being abused ; with the final consequence of such abuse,

14, 15. *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint, or, surrendered : my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws ; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*

For our sakes Christ yielded himself like 'water,' without resistance, to the violence of his enemies; suffering his 'bones,' in which consisteth the strength of the frame, to be distended and dislocated upon the cross ; while by reason of the fire from above, to the burning heat of which this paschal Lamb was exposed, his heart dissolved and melted away. The intenseness of his passion drying up all the fluids, brought on a thirst, tormenting beyond expression ; and, at last, laid him low in the grave. Never, blessed Lord, was love like unto thy love ! Never was sorrow like unto thy sorrow ! Thy spouse and body mystical, the church, is often, in a degree, conformed unto thee ; and as thou wert, so is she in this world.

16. *For dogs have compassed me : the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me : they pierced my hands and my feet.*

Our Lord, who compared himself above, ver. 12, to a lamb in the midst of bulls and lions, here setteth himself forth again under the image of a hart, or hind, roused early in the morning of his mortal life, hunted and chased all the day, and in the evening pulled down to the ground, by those

who ‘ compassed’ and ‘ enclosed’ him, thirsting and clamouring for his blood, crying, ‘ Away with him, away with him ! crucify him, crucify him !’ And the next step was, the ‘ piercing his hands and his feet,’ by nailing them to the cross. How often, O thou Preserver of men, in thy church, thy ministers, and thy word, art thou thus compassed, and thus pierced !

17. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

The skin and flesh were distended, by the posture of the body on the cross, that the bones, as through a thin veil, became visible, and might be counted ;¹ and the holy Jesus forsaken and stripped, naked and bleeding, was a spectacle to heaven and earth. Look unto him, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the world !

18. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

‘ The soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat; now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be ; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and, for my vesture they did cast lots.’ John, xix. 23, 24.

¹ “ Qui macilenti sunt, sic habent ossa prominentia, ut facile omnia possint tactu secerni et numerari. David, quatenus haec ei convenient, dicere hoc potuit de se fuga et molestis emaciato. Sed Christus aptius ita loqui poterat, quod magis emaciatus esset, et corpore nudo atque in cruce distento, magis adparerent ossa.” Le Clerc, cited by Bishop Lowth, in Merrick’s Annotations.

19. But be not thou far from me, O Lord ; O my strength, haste thee to help me.

The circumstances of the passion being thus related, Christ resumes the prayer with which the Psalm begins, and which is repeated, ver. 10, 11. The adversary had emptied his quiver, and spent all the venom of his malice ; Messiah therefore prayeth for a manifestation of the power and favour of heaven on his side, in a joyful and glorious resurrection. And to a resurrection from the dead every man will find it necessary to look forward for comfort.

20, 21. Deliver my soul from the sword ; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth : for thou hast heard me, or, and hear thou me, from the horns of the unicorns.*

The wrath of God was the 'sword,' which took vengeance on all men in their representative ; it was the 'flaming sword,' which kept men out of paradise ; the sword to which it was said, at the time of the passion, ' Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts : smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered : ' Zech. xiii. 7 ; Matt. xxvi. 31. The ravening fury of the 'dog,' the 'lion,' and the 'unicorn,' or the 'oryx,' a fierce and untamable creature of the stag kind, is made use of to describe the rage of the devil and his instruments, whether spiritual or corporeal. From all

* Heb. 'מִרְאֵב' my united one. " May it relate to any thing more than 'עָד' ? the human nature united with the Divinity in the person of Christ ? Quere." Bishop Lowth, in Merrick's Annotations.

these Christ supplicates the Father for deliverance. How great need have we to supplicate for the same, through him?

22. I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

The former part of the Psalm we have seen to be prophetical of the passion. The strain now changes to an epinikion, or hymn of triumph, in the mouth of the Redeemer, celebrating his victory, and its happy consequences. This verse is cited by the apostle, Heb. ii. 11. ‘Both he that sanctified, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren,’ &c. And accordingly, when the deliverance, so long wished, and so earnestly prayed for, was accomplished by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, he ‘declared the name of God,’ by his apostles, to all his ‘brethren;’ and caused the church to resound with incessant praises and hallelujahs; all which are here represented as proceeding from the body, by and through him who is the head of that body.

23. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

If Christ arose from the dead, to declare salvation to his brethren, and to glorify God for the same, how diligent ought we to be in doing the former; how delighted in the performance of the

* Bishop Lowth is of opinion, that this verse and the following are the ‘song’ of praise, which, in the verse preceding, the speaker says, he will utter ‘in the congregation.’ The introduction of it, as his lordship justly observes, gives a variety to the whole, and is highly poetical. Merrick’s Annotations.

latter ! Messiah first addressed himself to his ancient people, ‘the seed of Jacob,’ to whom the gospel was first preached. How long, O Lord, holy and true, shall thy once highly favoured nation continue deaf to this gracious call of thine ! ‘All ye seed of Jacob glorify him ; and fear him all ye seed of Israel.’

24. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted ; neither hath he hid his face from him ; but when he cried unto him, he heard.

The great subjects of praise and thanksgiving, in the church, are the sufferings of the lowly and afflicted Jesus, and the acceptance of those sufferings by the Father, as a propitiation for the sins of the world ; which acceptance was testified by raising him from the dead ; inasmuch as the discharge of the surety proved the payment of the debt. The poor and afflicted brethren of Christ may take comfort from this verse ; for if they suffer in his spirit, they will be raised in his glory.

25. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation : I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

The vow of Christ was, to build and consecrate to Jehovah a spiritual temple, in which the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise should be continually offered. This vow he performed after his resurrection, by the hands of his apostles, and still continueth to perform, by those of his ministers, carrying on the work of edification in ‘the great congregation’ of the Gentile Christian church. The vows of Christ cannot fail of being performed. Happy are they whom he vouchsafeth to use, as his instruments, in the performance of them.

26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied : they shall praise the Lord that seek him : your heart shall live for ever.

A spiritual banquet is prepared in the church for the meek and lowly of heart ; the bread of life and the wine of salvation are set forth in the word and sacraments ; and they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be 'satisfied' therewith : they 'who seek' the Lord Jesus in his ordinances, ever find reason to 'praise him ;' while, nourished by these noble and heavenly viands, they live the life, and work the works of grace, proceeding still forward to glory ; when their 'heart shall live for ever,' in heaven.

27. All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord : and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

The great truths of man's creation and fall, with the promise of a Redeemer to come, were 'forgotten' by the nations, after their apostacy from the true God, and the one true religion ; but were, as we may say, recalled to their 'remembrance,' by the sermons of the apostles, and the writings of Moses and the prophets, translated, and spread among them. By these they were converted to the faith, and now compose the holy church universal throughout the world ; being the 'glorious proofs and fruits of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.'

28. For the kingdom is the Lord's and he is the governor among the nations.

There is good reason why the nations should worship Christ, and throw away their idols ; since in his hand, not in theirs, is the government of the

world. Upon his ascension he was crowned King of kings, and Lord of lords; he ruleth in the church by his Spirit; and blessed are the hearts, that are his willing subjects in the day of his power.

29. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.

It was said above, ver. 26, ‘the meek,’ the poor, and lowly, ‘shall eat and be satisfied.’ It is here foretold, that the ‘fat ones of the earth,’ the great, the opulent, the flourishing, the nobles and princes of the world, should be called in to partake of the feast, and to ‘worship’ God. Rich, as well as poor, are invited;¹ and the hour is coming, when all the race of Adam, as many as sleep in the ‘dust’ of the earth, unable to raise themselves from thence, quickened and called forth by the voice of the Son of man, must ‘bow’ the knee to King Messiah.

30. A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

¹ They are ‘invited,’ but they do not so often accept the invitation. And it must be owned, that יְשַׁׁבֵּן נָדָעִים, are generally mentioned in an unfavourable sense. Bishop Lowth is therefore rather inclined to construe the words, as Mr. Fenwick does; all who are ‘fattened,’ that is, ‘fed’ and ‘sustained by the earth.’ The expression then intimates the universality of the gospel, which, the apostle says ‘was preached to every creature;’ a phrase of similar import. All who would partake the benefits of Christ’s passion, must worship him as a Saviour, before they are called upon to adore him as a judge. The bishop thinks, likewise, that the twenty-ninth verse should end with the words, ‘bow before him;’ that the next words in the original should be read, as almost all the ancient versions seem to have read them, לֹא חַיְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ, and rendered—‘But my soul shall live—My seed shall serve him,’ &c.

The apostle informeth us, Rom. ix. 8, that 'the children of the promise are counted for the seed ;' that is, the converts to be made among the nations, by the preaching of the gospel; according to the promise to Abraham ; these were to constitute the church and family of Christ, the 'generation' of the faithful ; these were to take the place, and enjoy the privileges of the Jews, cut off because of their unbelief. Lord, enable us to serve thee all our lives, with a service acceptable to thee in Christ Jesus ; that at the resurrection of the just, we may be numbered in the generation of thy children.

31. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

The promised and expected race shall spring forth at the time appointed, and proclaim the 'righteousness,' which is of God by faith, to ages and generations yet unborn : who, hearing of that great work, which the Lord shall have wrought for the salvation of men, will thereby be led to glorify him in the church, for the same, to the end of time.

Rise, crown'd with light, imperial Salem, rise ;
 Exalt thy tow'ring head, and lift thy eyes.
 See a long race thy spacious courts adorn ;
 See future sons, and daughters yet unborn,
 In crowding ranks, on ev'ry side arise,
 Demanding life, impatient for the skies.
 See barb'rous nations at thy gates attend,
 Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend.—MESSIAH.

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